



POTHOLE REPAIRS VOW OVER CUTS

By Richard Guttridge

MORE than £300,000 is to be slashed from Dudley Council's streets budget – but potholes will be tackled even on quieter roads, it has vowed.

To make savings on street maintenance the council revealed a new strategy for fixing roads in its draft budget for 2018/19 which says it will ensure 'efficient highways maintenance service by streamlining pothole repair processing'.

The strategy will be 'focusing carriageway resurfacing on (the) strategic highway network'.

But council leader Patrick Harley denied the focus on main roads meant smaller streets would be left unattended, despite the fact the authority aims to save £310,000 from the shake-up. He said teams could often react to potholes on



Patrick Harley

quieter roads quickly without the need for big expense.

Councillor Harley said: "We work a lot smarter and can do a lot more for a lot less."

Meanwhile, gritting bins will be returned to the previous levels following a reduction when Labour were in control of the council.

He said: "There is a clear commitment to return gritting bins. Councils make £20,000 or £30,000 savings but they end up having a big impact on the electorate."

An extra £200,000 will also be pumped into the maintenance of parks, green spaces and roads including more weed spraying, litter collection and grass cutting.

Mr Harley said: "This budget is about investment, about putting money back into services, so we can all be proud of the borough we live in and the services available to all residents."

"We recognise these are still very tough times for local authorities but it's important we remain focused on continuing to provide quality frontline services to our residents."

Dudley Council needs to save £5.6 million by 2021 on top of millions since 2010 due to budget cuts. But Councillor Harley insisted it was time to stop blaming the Government for budget cuts and focus on where authority could create its own revenue streams.

EXPANSION ON TARGET TO HELP MORE AT HOSPICE



Group chief executive Stevan Jackson checks progress at the building for Mary Stevens Hospice in Stourbridge

VITAL work to expand a day care centre so a charity can look after more terminally ill patients is on track – as the new-look building rises into the sky.

Mary Stevens Hospice is extending its Stourbridge facility as part of a £3 million project to expand its care facilities.

Charity bosses expect to move back into the building by August. Their day care service and offices have transferred to other buildings on site, located off Hagley Road.

Head of fundraising and lottery Charlotte Schofield said: "This project will allow us to

be able to treat more people, we will be able to support more families who are affected by these illnesses."

The day centre is being upgraded to feature a second storey, allowing the ground floor to hold all of the patient services.

This means the charity will be able to look after 25 people instead of 17, and operate seven days a week instead of Monday to Friday. Offices will be moved upstairs, and a new flat will also be built allowing patients and families to use it so they can stay overnight if necessary. Currently, the day service has

been moved to the charity's lottery and fundraising building, while its offices have moved to the Mary Stevens Centre. The charity cares for patients with terminal illnesses and also provides support for their families.

"We were operating at 100 per cent capacity for the last two years, so we are extending and refurbishing the day centre," said Charlotte. The cash for the project was generated through fundraising. Mary Stevens Hospice is always in need of financial support.

For more information, visit www.marystevenshospice.co.uk

Phone of missing man Matthew is turned on

A MISSING man's mobile phone has been switched on since he vanished, police have revealed.

Matthew Gill, 43, was last seen on October 6. His car was found in Stourton last week. Now police have said his mobile phone was switched on somewhere in the Stourton area last Thursday October 19 during the early evening and left switched on for several hours.

No calls were made or received. The phone is a Samsung Galaxy S5 Mini with Rocky Balboa cover. In a statement, West Midlands Police said whoever has



Matthew Gill

the phone 'is not in any trouble' and that they 'just need to understand more about how and where' the person got it from.

Detective Sergeant Andy Padmore, from the force's locate team, said: "Matthew has been missing nearly three weeks and we are really concerned as there has still been no contact with his family and friends and this is completely out of character for him."

"I need to speak to anyone with any information about his phone."

His partner Annette Woodhouse made an emotional plea for his return last week.

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FUNDING

Views sought on council tax rises

COUNCIL bosses revealed their plan to raise council tax by three per cent – but said residents will be asked if they would agree to a four or five per cent hike.

Dudley Council's cabinet is proposing a 2.99 per cent increase, which includes a one per cent precept for adult social care.

But before a decision is made residents will be asked to take part in a consultation to be launched next month.

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MP: Youth work job cuts unacceptable



Dudley MP Ian Austin

AN MP has labelled a council's plans to make youth workers redundant 'unacceptable' as he called for their jobs to be saved.

Ian Austin has urged Dudley Council to scrap its plans to make youth clubs for disabled children completely voluntary-run.

The proposals have been met with anger by dozens of parents who regularly take their children to the sessions.

A petition has been launched as the council faces a growing backlash over the plan. Staff who deliver sessions at

Rockies in Gornal, Lower Gornal Youth Centre, The Source in Wordsley and Stourbridge Youth Centre have all been told they are at risk of redundancy.

Mr Austin, Labour MP for Dudley North, has now waded into the row as he called for council bosses to think again.

He said: "I am very concerned about the effect these changes could have on disabled young people."

"The youth workers do a great job, they provide a valuable service to many youngsters and it's unacceptable that Dudley Council is putting this at risk."

"I'll be working with parents, young people and campaigners to do all I can to get the council to think again," he added.

Parents have raised concerns about the impact of the cuts on children who use the service.

The centres would remain open but would be run completely by volunteers, leading to questions about whether the model would be sustainable long-term.

Workers currently help provide support classes for around 100 children and young people across the Dudley borough with a range of disabilities.

£6m primary school will open doors next year

A £6 MILLION new primary school for 400 pupils will be built on the former Coseley School site with plans to open next year. The former secondary controversially shut its doors this summer due to dwindling numbers with pupils shifted out to neighbouring schools.

Now it has emerged that the empty 1960s building will be transformed into Coseley Technology Primary.

Council bosses say that the free primary school in Henne Drive will open to 60 reception and Year 1 pupils in September 2018, under proposals agreed by the DfE. The existing school buildings will be leased to the Shireland Collegiate Academy Trust for two years while building work begins on the site.

The trust also took over Thorns Community College in Quarry Bank this year. It comes as plans for its first phase of development are going to Dudley Council's cabinet this month.

Children's services chief, Councillor Anne Millward said: "We have already established a strong, productive working relationship with the Shireland's team when they took over the running of Thorns Community College in 2017 and we look forward to working with them on this ambitious new project."

School raises £1k for Alzheimer's

Pupils and staff at a Stourbridge school have raised more than £1,000 for the Alzheimer's Society.

Old Swinford Hospital School's Interact Group held three cake sales during September.

Last month, Headmaster Paul Kilbride took on the challenge of his first marathon.

He successfully completed the inaugural Birmingham International Marathon in five hours 12 minutes.

Mr Kilbride said: "Alzheimer's has not only impacted on the lives of members of our own community at OSH, but it is something our pupils need to be aware of and understand, so that they may contribute to how we manage the condition in the future."

Work signalled on traffic lights

A SCHEME to upgrade traffic lights on busy roads in the Dudley borough is being stepped up. Signals are being improved along Duncan Edwards Way and surrounding roads to reduce congestion. The work is being carried out this week to coincide with the half-term holiday.

Fountain's 150-year heritage celebrated

EXACTLY 150 years to the minute it was originally unveiled, a presentation ceremony was held to celebrate an iconic landmark.

An illuminated scroll and 18-inch commemorative bronze disc were presented to the Mayor of Dudley by chairman of the Victorian Society Birmingham and West Midlands Group Stephen Hartland.

It was done at midday on Tuesday – the exact time and date the original fountain was unveiled 150 years ago to the town by the Earl of Dudley.

Mayor of Dudley, Councillor Dave Tyler, said: "We were delighted to receive the award in 2016, and think that the idea to formally present it to the town 150 years to the day of the fountain's initial unveiling is a wonderful one."

"The Victorian Society does such an important job in promoting and preserving our shared architectural heritage across the country and it's an honour to be chosen."

"I look forward to receiving the award, on behalf of the town and appreciate the recognition this represents for our wider work in restoring and revitalising our wonderful town centre."

It comes as the recently-restored Dudley Fountain was awarded the Victorian Society's Birmingham and West Midlands Conservation Award in 2016 for the sensitive and skilled restoration of the fountain.

The first unveiling saw thousands turn out with mounted soldiers on horseback surrounding the fountain.

People crowded onto the streets and some even stood on the roofs of buildings to get a better view of the landmark. Designed by James Forsyth the fountain featured dolphins and flowers as representations of mining, agriculture and industry.



The fountain

Thousands flock to canal festival



Oliver Maunder, aged six, and Neal Thomas by a 1923 Foden steam lorry on display at the Bonded Warehouses

Thousands of people flocked to an annual canal festival to celebrate the town's waterways at the weekend.

The two-day event in Stourbridge saw almost 100 canal boats take part, with old steam engines also attending.

Organisers declared the event 'very successful' and said spirits had not been dampened by the windy and wet weather.

It was the 37th year the Stourbridge Navigation Trust held its

Open Weekend at the Bonded Warehouse on Canal Street.

Chris Dyché, Trust financial director, said: "The event was very successful. Obviously the weather knocked us down a lot of Saturday, but Sunday was absolutely superb. I would estimate around 5,000 to 8,000 people came throughout the weekend."

"We had nearly 100 boats alongside a steam roller, a steam train engine and a steam lorry. The event is done completely free to

the public. It is run to promote the waterways and the building and to give something back to the local community each year."

Among those who attended was Oliver Maunder, aged six, of Raglan, and Neal Thomas, of Solihull, who were photographed next to a 1923 Foden steam lorry.

Traders opened stalls at the festival, but outside traders had to close early on Saturday due to the bad weather, said Mr Dyché. Two boats had even sailed from Wales.

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Cradley firm Kee Safety snapped up for £280m

A BLACK Country firm supplying safety products for people working around the world has been bought in a £280 million deal.

Kee Safety, which employs around 480 people, has been sold by its owners, investment groups Dunedin and LDC, to Bahrain-based Investcorp.

Established in the UK in 1934 and based on the Cradley Business Park, in Cradley Heath, the firm is considered the leading global provider of equipment to protect people working at height from the risk of falling.

Its products include fall prevention equipment, roof edge protection, barrier and guardrail systems and safe access solutions. Kee also has established operations in 10 countries, including the US and China.

Chris Milburn, chairman, said: "International expansion and an active acquisition strategy have formed key tenets of our growth story over recent years.

"We believe that Investcorp's proven track record, global presence and network will be extremely valuable in this regard."

Investcorp says it plans to support Kee's international growth strategy.

Jose Pfeifer, principal in Investcorp's European Corporate Investment group, said: "We believe that the company is well-positioned to solidify its leading position and gain a greater market share in a sizeable industry."

Parking bays for shops look likely

PLANS for parking bays to be introduced in a congested retail area are moving one step closer.

A total of 12 bays are proposed for Shell Corner, near Halesowen, in a bid to boost footfall for shops.

Councillor Stuart Henley said that proposals will be distributed for consultation with ward members and the police within the next couple of months, followed by a full public consultation.

The bays would form part of the proposed Traffic Regulation Order programme for 2017-18.

They would be placed near shops in Malt Mill Lane and outside stores in Long Lane.

It would see a mixture of on-road and on-pavement parking bays.

Movie matinee

ROMANTIC drama *Hamstead* starring Diane Keaton will be screened in a town hall. The film will be the movie matinee in Stourbridge at 1.30pm on November 20. Tickets are £4.50 and available on 01384 812812.

Brother 'given murder accused's phone'



Benjamin Morse

A POLICE officer who arrested a murder suspect has told a jury how he allegedly handed a phone to his brother to be disposed of. Pc Stephen Williams and another officer detained Nidal Alboraiqi outside his home in Foxhunt Road, Halesowen, hours after he is alleged to have murdered Benjamin Morse in a Bank Holiday hit-and-run.

CCTV footage seen by the jury shows Nidal Alboraiqi's brother Ahmed come out from the house and approach as the arrest takes place on the driveway.

At Wolverhampton Crown Court yesterday, Pc Williams, said: "As we attempted to handcuff Nidal his brother, Ahmed Alboraiqi,

was approaching. There was a conversation. I could not understand it. It was in Arabic. Ahmed Alboraiqi was told to back off and to keep away. I was fearful of officer's safety at the time.

"Nidal Alboraiqi passed his brother Ahmed Alboraiqi a mobile phone."

Pc Williams and the other arresting officer, Pc Hayley Denyer, allege that Nidal Alboraiqi had resisted arrest and not complied with their verbal commands.

Ahmed Alboraiqi was arrested on suspicion of assisting an offender. He was later charged with seeking to pervert the course of justice, which he denies. The phone has not been re-

covered by the police. Gulam Ahmed QC, defending Ahmed Alboraiqi, 19, said his client denied taking a phone from his brother. Mr Morse, aged 36, of Yewtree Road, Halesowen, was struck by a Vauxhall Corsa in Beach Street, Halesowen, in the early hours of May 1 having just been dropped off by a taxi with a group of friends.

The prosecution allege there was an exchange of some kind between Nidal Alboraiqi, 21 - who accepts driving the Corsa - and the group which prompted him to drive towards them. He denies murder and seeking to pervert the course of justice by trying to dispose of the Corsa. The trial continues.

£1 million clean-up bill as fly-tipping increases

FLY-TIPPING is on the increase with councils spending more than £1 million clearing and disposing of waste in just one year.

Dudley borough alone had 1,069 fly-tipping incidents in 2016/17 - up from 824 in the previous 12 months.

Figures released by the Government show there were 16,458 incidents of waste dumped across the Black Country councils, Stafford, Lichfield, Cannock and the Wyre Forest.

The statistics from the financial year 2016/17 are up from 15,623 the year before.

Dudley Council was forced to spend £63,295 in the past year to clear up fly-tipping - nearly £15,000 more than the £49,000 that was spent in 2015/16.

Council leader Patrick Harley said: "From a council point of view fly-tipping is extremely frustrating.

"The £63,000 we spent clearing it up in 2016/17 could have been much better spent on frontline services for communities that need them. However, one thing I would say is most of the people who do this are incredibly stupid.

Shocking

"They pay people to take away their rubbish in good faith. But then the rubbish will just be dumped anywhere. Normally the person who's paid to have their rubbish taken away will have left something with their name on.

"So if we can't take the person who actually dumped it to court then we will go after the person who paid for their rubbish to be removed. We will come after those people."

South Staffordshire MP Gavin Williamson said: "The idea that £1 million of public money has been spent clearing up environmental vandalism this year is absolutely shocking.

"It goes to show how far behind the courts are. They need to be levelling much higher penalties and fines on these people to act as a deterrent. Courts can level fines of up to £50,000 on people court fly-tipping, but more often than not they only get fined £1,000 or £1,500 at most.

"It's about time the courts got serious about dealing with these individuals who are destroying our countryside, towns and villages."

Of the incidents last year, 209 white goods were dumped in Dudley, 54 tyres were ditched in Wolver-



Dudley Council spent £63,295 clearing fly-tipping



Jamie Humpage throws a mattress out of a van

hampton and eight animal carcasses were left out in Walsall.

Among the fly-tippers caught locally is Jamie Humpage - the first man jailed for dumping rubbish in Walsall.

The 28-year-old, of Booth Close in Walsall, admitted eight offences of dumping rubbish in Coppice Lane, Brownhills, and Back Lane, Aldridge.

He was caught on camera dumping mattresses, wardrobes and other rubbish.

Councillor Chris Jones, portfolio holder for clean and green at Walsall Council, said: "We vigorously

pursue prosecutions when we are able to secure the evidence to bring it before a judge. The public play an important part in helping us to do this. If we are alerted quickly, if evidence is captured and filmed it helps us build a stronger case."

And in Wolverhampton, earlier this month letters inside black bags dumped at Withy Road Industrial Estate were used to find Abid Khaliq, who paid a man £80 to take away his household rubbish.

The 43-year-old, of Highland Road, Dudley, failed to check the white van man was an authorised person to transfer waste. He received a £250 fine.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Revamp of bar now step closer

PLANS to refurbish a former landmark wine bar in Dudley as part of a £655,000 project have taken a major step forward.

Council bosses have handed in a £249,000 bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) to help finance the scheme at the former Merlin's bar in Wolverhampton Street. The building is classified as a heritage asset but has stood empty for 20 years.

The council has already committed £260,000 from the sale of properties owned by the authority with a further £145,000 coming from the Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP).

Disabled drivers helped by app

DISABLED drivers will be offered help refuelling their cars after a Black Country supermarket became the first to launch a new app.

Sainsbury's in Amblecote, Stourbridge, has launched the fuelService app, which allows customers to send a message to forecourt staff, letting them know they require assistance.

As the driver pulls up to a pump, staff in the station are notified of their arrival and, by pressing a button, staff can acknowledge their arrival and inform the customer how long they will be.

Orchestra tunes up for church date

STOURBRIDGE Chamber Orchestra will be performing a concert in a town church next month.

The concert in St Mary's Parish Church, Rectory Road, Oldswinford, on November 11 at 7.30pm will raise funds for the Friends of Music at St Mary's.

The programme will include works by Beethoven, Haydn and Elgar.

Tickets priced at £10 are available from Harris & Son, Wollaston, the church or online at www.gigacitas.com

Marching band takes steps to third place

A MARCHING brass band has taken part in a national finals event.

The Coseley Comets performed at the British Youth Band national finals in Worcester and achieved third place.

Jayne Poole, the corps director, said it was a fantastic day and everyone on the field performed to their full potential. The band will next be leading Coseley's remembrance parade and then switching on the Christmas lights in Roseville on December 1.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Head's thanks for extra PE funding

A HEADTEACHER has praised Government funding to boost PE, saying it has benefited her school in Dudley. Every primary school is set to have its Primary PE and School Sport Premium funding doubled by Government with money to be received this month.

Glynn Primary acting headteacher Tracey Powell said: "Having the funding really helps to raise the profile of sport. I feel our school offers children a wide range of opportunities within the curriculum and outside. We celebrate children's sporting talents and those children who show particular flair are also further challenged."

Body in wardrobe suspect in court

A MAN charged with murdering a 17-year-old girl whose body was found in a clingfilm-wrapped wardrobe has appeared in court for a preliminary hearing.

Ashley Foster, aged 24, of no fixed address, denies murdering Megan Bills.

Her body was found at a flat in Highgate Road, Brierley Hill. A trial date is set for January 8.

Earlier this year Foster admitted preventing the lawful and decent burial of Miss Bills between April 15 and May 5.

Revamped pub opens its doors

A Dudley town centre pub has reopened following a major refurbishment.

Guests invited to the lunchtime opening of The Malt Shovel in Tower Street included Dudley North MP Ian Austin and the Mayor of Dudley, Councillor Dave Tyler.

The building has undergone a 12-month upgrade and will offer a selection of cask ales including beers from local brewers.

The pub, which re-opened last week, is being managed by Tim Hodgkinson.

Derelict pub set on fire in arson attack

A blaze swept through the first floor of a derelict pub in a suspected arson attack.

Eight firefighters tackled the incident at the former Metro Bar pub in Trindle Road last week. Officials say they believe the eyesore building was 'deliberately' set on fire.

Two crews from Dudley and Brierley Hill attended the blaze, which broke out around 4pm on October 19 and took half an hour to extinguish.

Asbestos is removed at building used by charities

ASBESTOS is being removed from a building occupied by three charities in Stourbridge.

Dudley Council is undertaking asbestos removal works from Mary Stevens Centre in Stourbridge. The authority is spending around £40,000 on the work.

The building is currently occupied by Mary Stevens Hospice, Beacon Centre for the Blind and Dudley MIND.

Age Concern formerly occupied the majority of the ground floor, but they vacated the centre in September.

The building, formerly known as the Mary Stevens Maternity Home, is located behind the current Mary Stevens Hospice building, which is currently undergoing a £3 million upgrade.

The asbestos work was revealed in a council report that is seeking to grant new leases to the charities that would see them pay costs towards maintenance of the building.

It was previously proposed that the rent would be charged at a market rate, but councillors on the committee have decided to charge a 'peppercorn' rent – meaning a very low or nominal fee.

A council report said: "It is proposed that leases are put in place with the occupants so that the rights and responsibilities of all parties are clarified."

£4k grant to help pay for medical kit

An NHS Trust has announced it has bagged £4,000 from a Tesco funding scheme.

Shoppers voted for funding to go to Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust's children's appeal after buying bags at stores.

The money will go to pay for new equipment and facilities benefiting children. These include infra-red vein finders, which are particularly effective for babies and children when veins do not always show.

Fundraising manager Karen Phillips said: "We would like to thank everyone who selected the children's appeal as part of the Bags of Help initiative in local Tesco stores. It is fantastic to raise awareness of this worthy cause."

Restaurant on way

A TAKEAWAY will be turned into a restaurant in Dudley. The building in King Street will be converted and seven parking spaces added after a change of use application was approved on October 13.

Anger as youth workers face redundancy

YOUTH workers could be made redundant as part of cost-cutting proposals to make services for disabled children in Dudley completely run by volunteers.

Seventeen support staff are facing the prospect of losing their jobs after Dudley Council entered discussions with them over a shake-up of youth services. Workers currently help provide support classes for children and young people across the borough with a range of disabilities, which help to give parents respite and allow youngsters to mix with others.

Evening classes at Gornal Youth Club, Rockies in Gornal and The Source in Wordsley, which are attended by around 100 children, are among those

affected. Volunteers help to deliver the sessions alongside paid council staff but the local authority now wants to make them totally community-run.

Staff were called into a meeting last week and told they could be made redundant.

Petition

Dudley North MP Ian Austin is against the move, saying: "Plans to bring in voluntary organisations to run local youth clubs in Dudley puts vulnerable young people at risk." He has urged people to sign an online petition against the proposal.

Victoria Lovelock, aged 36, whose 18-year-old daughter Jamie-Lee attends sessions at Rockies, said: "I think it's disgusting. All of the staff have

built up trust with the children and now it is going to change to a voluntary organisation. I am ready to fight it."

The local authority is aiming to make savings of £20 million this financial year.

Councillor Anne Millward, cabinet member for children's services, said 'difficult decisions' needed to be made due to cuts but stressed nothing had been finalised.

She said: "As part of our programme of savings, some difficult decisions have had to be made around youth services. But there is no intention of closing these sessions. We are keen to ensure they continue running. No firm decisions have been made and we are still consulting."

Leisure centre plan is revealed by council boss

A NEW leisure centre will be built in the heart of Dudley and centres in Stourbridge and Halesowen revamped as part of a £22 million investment.

Dudley's current leisure centre in Wellington Road will be knocked down and the site sold off to allow for the building of a new facility on Flood Street car park 'fit for the 21st Century'.

Uncertainty over the future of leisure centres in Stourbridge and Halesowen has now vanished as the Conservative group that controls Dudley Council outlined a commitment to health facilities in its first draft budget since taking control in May.

Council tax will rise by at least three per cent from April, while 35 jobs will be cut across the authority, it was announced yesterday. Further cuts will have to be made to save another £5.6m by 2021, leader Patrick Harley said.

But he insisted it was the most positive budget set out by the council in years.

Leisure centres had been on course to be cut in Dudley, as proposals were revealed by the previous Labour administration to axe either Stourbridge or Halesowen's centre. But the plan sparked uproar and was later scrapped.

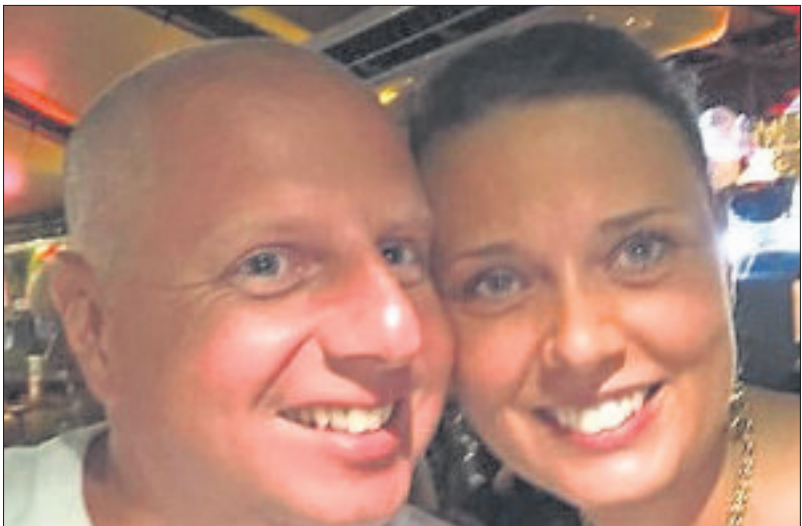
Saga

Councillor Harley said: "It will end this saga once and for all. The people of Dudley, Stourbridge and Halesowen deserve to be put out of their misery on leisure centres. We have made a decision to build a new leisure centre to serve Dudley North and Dudley South, it will be near Dudley southern bypass, and carry out a back-log of repairs at Stourbridge and Halesowen."

Regeneration boss Ian Kettle said: "Over the last 12 months there has been a lot of discussion around the future of our leisure centres and it's clear from what people have said there remains a huge demand for three leisure centres in the borough."

Councillor Harley said it was expected the centre would be built by 2021 and the current Dudley Leisure Centre would not close until the new one was ready.

The not knowing is the hardest



Matthew Gill, 43, with partner Annette, who described him as 'supportive, kind, considerate and loving'

'MATTY please just let us know you are alright. Please come home.'

These are the heartbreaking words of the partner of a missing Stourbridge man almost three weeks after his disappearance.

Matthew Gill, 43, was last seen leaving his home at 9am on October 6. His partner Annette

Woodhouse described Matthew as 'supportive, kind, considerate and loving'. She said: "It is very hard – the not knowing has to be the hardest. The amount of support from all the searchers has been overwhelming, but we need to continue."

Annette said the #findliggy Facebook page has been a helpful

tool to drive searches, but has yet to bring up any clues about his whereabouts. She said her message to him was: "Matty please just let us know you are alright."

Matthew is described as white, 5ft 10ins tall, medium build, clean shaven with short cropped hair. Anybody with information is urged to call 101.

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IN MY VIEW

with Mark Andrews



Four-bed house, and you call that poor!

DON'T you just love it when people intent on trying to pursue an agenda are so out of touch that they achieve the exact opposite?

Take the new Channel 5 documentary series, Rich House, Poor House. The aim was pretty unambiguous. Take some of the most affluent members of society, and have them swap lives with some of the poorest, highlighting the vast gulf in how people live.

Except that the "poor family" in last week's edition lived in a four-bedroom house, had £170 left over each week, and best of all, had Sky television.

Is that the best they could find? Either the research team haven't done a terribly good job, or this country is a lot better off than we all realised.

□□□

THIS Met Office practice of giving names to every bit of bad weather really isn't working, is it? America gets Hurricane Ophelia. We get Storm Brian. Just doesn't have the same ring to it, does it?

□□□

HOW sad to see two businesses in Wolverhampton city centre close their doors because of the never-ending roadworks around the Midland Metro tramline. It has echoes of how, a couple of years ago, the E Marsh furniture store, one of the nicest shops in the city, moved out following a highly questionable pedestrianisation scheme.

If the tramlines are worn, I suppose the operators have no choice but to replace them. But it does pose more questions about the benefits of the tram system. At the moment, it is planned to extend the line from Wednesbury to Brierley Hill. Which, if I were unkind, I might feel inclined to brand as Low Speed 2.

Imagine the chaos and congestion that work is going to cause, as mile upon mile of the Black Country's already creaking road network is dug up. All to create a transport system marginally quicker than a bus.

Yes it will connect the Black Country to the rail network, and it is a tragic waste that the mothballed train line between Walsall and Stourbridge has been lying idle for half a century.

But at the expense of sounding controversial, instead of linking the Black Country to the rail network, why not make it part of it? Just leave the railway line where it is, and put some trains on it. No need to dig the roads up, no need for a network of new power cables, and best of all, it would be twice as quick.

Trains on railway lines, cars on roads. It's a tried and tested formula. And it could catch on.

Claim that "negative stereotypes" put women off



Peter Fiennes, author of new book, explains that oaks can live to be 1,000



Nigella Lawson – revelation now that she can cook the perfect poached egg



CHRIS Packham – claims that Asperger's syndrome made him a recluse

They're firefighters – by any name

LONDON'S Fire Commissioner, Dany Cotton, says "negative stereotypes" are putting women off joining the fire service. She declares: "One single thing that would help bring more women into the service? Stop saying firemen." Ms Cotton believes the inclusive word "firefighter" would be more helpful. Reality check, please. The truth is that every media organisation has been dutifully using "firefighter" for the past 20 years and yet female recruitment is still low. I suspect women are put off not by the wrong language but by the brigade's own rules - the physical tests demanded of all recruits. Consider this typical casualty-evacuation test: "Candidates in full PPE (personal protection equipment) will be required to drag a 55kg casualty walking backwards (guided by an assessor) around a 30-metre course." How many young women could attempt that? The problem is not sexism but biology. And if all firefighters were suddenly rebranded "firewomen," young men would still queue up to join and women would still stay away in droves.

"IT'S a long retirement," Peter Fiennes, author of a new book on trees, explaining that oaks can live to be 1,000 but produce most acorns when aged 50-150.

THE big news of the week was the revelation that Nigella Lawson can cook the perfect poached egg, having been tutored in the art by a French chef. I won't bore you with the process; life is far too short. And I smiled at John Humphry's gruff reaction on Today (Radio 4). He pointed out that anyone can soft-boil an egg and scoop the contents on to toast. Voilà - instant poached egg.

FOLLOWING my recent item on detectorists,

THE BEST OF PETER RHODES



a reader reports an exciting day on the urban fringe. Her metal detector gave a sudden strong signal and the digging began. She dug with her spade. Her friend dug with his spade. After several minutes they uncovered their find. It was a spade.

HOW green are the greenies? Researchers at Cambridge examined the lifestyle of conservation scientists and discovered that most of them had normal-sized carbon footprints and flew an average of nine times a year. The researchers concluded: "there was little correlation between the extent of environmental knowledge and environmentally-friendly behaviour." Which reinforces something I have suspected for ages, that when someone is banging on about saving the planet, you can often find harmless amusement by asking: "How many times did you fly last year?"

CHRIS Packham has Asperger's syndrome, a form of autism. In Chris Packham: Asperger's and Me (BBC 2) he explained how it made him a recluse, utterly fixated on animals. He avoids social company with humans and was unable to attend parties or even go to his own step-daughter's graduation. I cannot be the only viewer who had some difficulty squaring this Chris Packham with the star of Chris Packham's Wild Night Out, the stage show he takes to venues around the country. Thousands of us have seen Packham cheerfully addressing huge audiences, confidently taking questions and

signing books while chatting with strangers. The fact that he would not wish his own condition to be cured suggests that Packham's form of Asperger's is mild - and far milder than some of the troubled Asperger's sufferers he met in this programme. The programme has been hailed by the critics as courageous, challenging and stunning, but did it actually tell us much about Asperger's?

IS anyone else surprised that, while the weather forecasters queued up to explain why the sky had turned orange a few days ago, no-one warned us in advance that it was going to happen? Not so much forecasting as afcasting.

THE official report on the sinking of HMS Sheffield in the 1982 Falklands War, released this week, is a sorry tale of unpreparedness. But hindsight is always crystal-clear and, as any old warrior will tell you, it requires a huge mental leap to switch from peace to war, and to comprehend that complete strangers are trying to kill you. One officer in the Falklands described seeing an Argentine Skyhawk dropping its bombs on British troops. His first thought was: "My God, don't they realise how dangerous that is?"

AFTER the recent gripping item on buying guttering parts online, regular eBay purchasers will know what comes next. Sure enough, the emails arrived demanding to know exactly how fit-for-purpose are the fixers, joints, bends and the rest, followed by an invitation to write a review on each of the 10 different items. The last thing I was asked to review on eBay was a tub of fire cement. For pity's sake, how rhapsodic can you wax about a 68mm black PVC down-pipe?

TALKING POINT



Mobiles in toilets, that is taking the pee

SO, there I am, in Sainsbury's toilets, minding my own business, when I hear a voice behind me: "Hello...hello...hello..."

Very disconcerting, a social situation which seems to be becoming more part of the norm these days. Of course it turns out the person speaking is on his mobile phone. Well us blokes only need one hand to erm, you know. And no, I don't think he had the decency to wash his hands after his time at the urinal.

For the average bewildered middle aged person, such as myself, walking down the street is increasingly fraught with, at the very least, perturbation and even possible danger.

Perturbation - because of the amount of people holding highly-animated conversations with themselves, or at least it seems so until you spot the earphone/headset linked to whatever device they're using.

Danger - thanks to the fact that if they're not actually talking, 50 per cent of pedestrians these days have their head down engrossed in text messaging. YouTube, you name it, and are not actually concentrating on where they are going, or who they are just about to bump into.

Going past bus stops is hilarious these days. Lines of people heads down, earphones in, not aware of anything outside of their own sensory-deprived bubble. If I was a bus driver, I'd probably take it personally that none of them actually look up anymore to see when the bus is arriving, and drive straight past.

The mobile phone has seeped into the general populous's consciousness so much these days that even TV programme-makers have had to include it as a necessary dramatic tool. After all, it's now a means for secret revelations. That little buzz in the pocket and it's so difficult to ignore, so writers have jumped on this.

But the most ridiculous sight involving the dreaded mobile has to be my wife and I enjoying a pint outside in the sunshine at a local hostelry. Another couple arrived, on bicycles, and we were impressed, as they were probably slightly older than us. They got their drinks and proceeded to sit one in front of the other, facing the same way, like they were on some invisible train, and started playing with their mobile phones. Not a word was uttered. It was bizarre, but a sad indictment of how things are in today's modern world.

We will, as a race, surely eventually evolve into something which caters more easily for texting, receiving calls, and maybe in years to come it will lead to the eradication of speech altogether. Mind you, with some people, that can only be a good thing!

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Labour and their latest 'trump' card

HEY! This bloke must be worth listening to. He's a KCB and a QC...not to mention a Bachelor of Civil Law from Oxford.

Labour seem to think they will always have a trump card. Here they turn to a man of integrity, a man who you'd turn to if you're in a tight corner over your human rights.

Who is this paragon; this epitome of all that is British, this saviour of the nation I hear you cry? I speak of course of Sir Kier Starmer. In the event of a volcano erupting on Sedgley Beacon, Labour would come to power and take over Brexit negotiations.

Cavendish House – a real shame

HAS an opportunity been missed with Cavendish House? It has been empty now for many years and not fully occupied since the Inland Revenue moved out, now we hear it is to be demolished and a further shopping centre is planned even though there are empty units in West Bromwich, Wolverhampton and even Merry Hill.

Online shopping is forcing cut backs by many stores and the centres are becoming places to walk around and meet up for coffee and snacks rather than spending much money, so why chance yet another shopping centre? There is and always will be demand for homes and Cavendish House could have been converted into flats ideal for singles or for student accommodation.

The internal walls could have easily been altered to change from offices to flats. It will not happen now but I feel it is a shame that we seem to have wasted the chance of doing some good with Cavendish House.

RON GWILLIAMS
Brierley Hill

How you ask will he succeed where the might of the Tories is failing? Well it's in the delivery. Watch him on TV. The man is almost tearful as he beseeches us all to recognise that without going on our hands and knees, those giants in Europe will not even throw a crumb of sustenance our way.

Listening to him this morning on the Today programme, I too was in tears....at the devastating thought of him ever getting within 100 miles of the negotiating table.

ALAN M ETHERIDGE
Dudley

Money all EU is after

EU only ever wanted our money. Jean Claude Juncker's outburst that 'We Europeans have to be grateful for so many things Britain has brought to Europe during the war, before the war and after the war, but now they have to pay', should be enough now to silence even the hardest remainer.

But still we keep hearing the old chestnut of 'what happened to the 350 million to the NHS on the big red bus?' Simple answer to this is – we are still in the EU and therefore still paying.

We are still paying in around 10 billion pounds per year for our EU gym membership which is around 192 million per week or put another way the big red bus should have said, 384 million a fortnight can go to the NHS when we finally leave the EU.

GORDON EDWARD
FANTHOM
Swindon

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

POST

Dudley Chronicle,
Chronicle Editorial,
51-53 Queen Street
Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES

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expressandstar.co.uk

Letters should be brief and MUST include name, address and telephone number. The Editor reserves the right to condense letters.

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Clarity on why B52s are still in service

AFTER reading John Gregory's letter regarding the B52 I feel I must point out a few things. The Vulcan was retired from service due to the Royal Navy taking over the nuclear deterrent while the Victor was turned into refuelling tankers. The Vulcan was taken off the scrap heap to bomb the Falklands in the Black Buck raids using eleven Victors for each Vulcan.

The reason B52's are still flying is because the USAF have so many that they are flown on a rotation. I doubt

if any have anywhere near the amount of air miles XH 558 has.

While on active service in the 60s its state-of-the-art electronic counter measures made it virtually unstoppable. During the Skyshield exercises in the USA in 59, 60 and 61 Vulcans flew through US air defences above B52s undetected to reach all their targets while at operational altitudes they could outmanoeuvre any fighter of the day.

K ROWLEY
Wordsley

Singer Neil a real Diamond

WHAT a fantastic performer Neil Diamond is! 76 years old and he could certainly show many younger singers a thing or two.

At the concert at Birmingham Arena on October 13 he was on stage for over two hours with no support act and to say he rocked the place is an understatement! He had us all on our feet singing and clapping along. I think there was no doubt that the years have not diminished the talent of this incredible entertainer.

A brilliant evening from a brilliant performer.
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'Squalid' bedsits owned by millionaire are shut

A 'squalid' rundown property owned by a millionaire rogue landlord has been shut by police after complaints of anti-social behaviour and crime.

Latif Rehman was ordered to pay more than £340,000 earlier this month after illegally converting several houses in Dudley into bedsits, ignoring council notices to undo the work.

A judge said the 58-year-old, who earns £150,000 a year from rents, knew that he was breaching planning regulations.

Now West Midlands Police has secured a closure order against one of Rehman's premises in Wolverhampton Street, Dudley.

Officers moved in following residents' concerns about anti-social behaviour and crime involving tenants.

Dudley Council began investigating Rehman, of Harborne, Birmingham, in 2015 after he converted four homes – including the address in Wolverhampton Road – into cramped bedsits without planning permission.

Enforcement notices were served on Rehman in relation to two adjoining properties in Cole Street, one in Northfield Road, Netherton, and a fourth – the house in Wolverhampton Road, Wall Heath. But in each case he ignored the notice and continued to rent them out.

Rehman pocketed a total of £278,000 in tenants' housing benefits from Dudley Council. The two Cole Street houses had each been turned into five flats and the other two both into six.

Wolverhampton Crown Court heard that the council had 'bent over backwards' to allow him the time to comply with the enforcement notices, but instead Rehman used the time to obtain more rent. He was ordered to pay Dudley Council compensation of £278,028, fined a total of £40,000 and ordered to pay £25,898 prosecution costs.

Lead the pack with cards



Dudley Zoo workers with some of the fact-based Top Trumps cards which visitors can now get hold of. Photo: www.dudleyzoo.org.uk

DUDLEY Zoo have announced a brand new game to keep youngsters entertained during half term visits – while they also learn about some of the zoo's rarest residents.

DZG Top Trumps, priced at just £4.99 from the Safari Shop, features 29 colourful cards featuring some of the zoo's most popular animals from across their bird, primate, big cat and ungulate sections. Categories on the cards include cuteness,

max weight and Top Trump rating based on facts about the species.

All half-term visitors that buy the cards will receive a special limited edition bonus DZG 80th anniversary Where It All Began card on arrival at the zoo, which can be added and played in the pack.

Dudley Zoo Retail Manager Isobel Blackwell, said: "It's educational and another new branded souvenir for our zoo supporters to enjoy."

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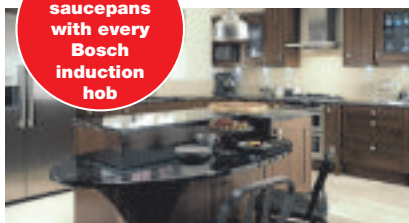
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Rat droppings led to bosses being fined

FORMER owners of a takeaway have been fined after rat droppings were found in a kitchen.

New Pepitos in Dudley was visited by environmental health officers in December after anonymous complaints.

Mohammed Khaliq and Mohammed Zamir, owners at the time, pleaded guilty to breaches of health and hygiene regulations when they appeared before Wolverhampton magistrates.

The takeaway had inadequate pest control procedures, dirty surfaces and equipment, and no hot water for a hand-wash basin.

Neither Khaliq or Zamir currently run the takeaway, which is now trading under a new name by new proprietors who are not connected to the case. The court heard after the discovery of rat droppings that officers immediately closed the premises using emergency powers.

Khaliq and Zamir both pleaded guilty to nine offences under food hygiene and safety regulations at court on October 5.

The court heard Khaliq, 44, of Bunns Lane, Dudley and 44-year-old Zamir, of Highfield Road, Dudley, were inexperienced. They were ordered to pay nearly £1,000 each in fines, costs and charges.

Ton up Gerry's party was the hottest ticket



Gerry Byrne, of Stourbridge, has celebrated turning 100

PLENTY of people feel popular on their birthday but imagine not being able to fit all of your friends onto the party guest-list.

That's the case for Stourbridge centenarian Gerry Byrne. The former Midland Red bus conductor celebrated turning 100 with a party at the Stourbridge Institute earlier this month but couldn't fit all of his friends in.

Eldest son Peter Byrne said: "There are so many people we could have invited to Gerry's party but there simply wasn't enough room."

Originally from County Limerick in Ireland, Gerry turned 100 on October 5. He moved to Stourbridge in 1943 and worked as a bus conductor for Midland Red from 1948 until 1979, later working at Mecca Bingo on the Hagley Road until he retired aged 76.

Gerry had eight children with wife Dorothy, who he married in 1947, and has 11 grandchildren and 10 great grandchildren. An Irish citizen, he is set to receive the Centenarian Bounty, a national award made by the Irish president to their nationals who have reached the age of 100.

Disabled motorists helped by new app

DISABLED drivers will be offered help refuelling their cars after a Black Country supermarket became the first to launch a new app.

Sainsbury's in Amblecote, Stourbridge, has launched the fuelService app, which allows customers to send a message to forecourt staff, letting them know they require assistance.

Store manager Kevin Healy said: "We are delighted to be working with fuelService to make this option available to as many of our customers as possible."

"We want to be the most inclusive retailer, making all our customers feel welcome when they shop with us"

As the driver pulls up to a pump, staff in the station are notified of their arrival and, by pressing a button, staff can acknowledge their arrival and inform the customer how long they will be.

MPs are encouraged by meeting over travellers

TORY MPs from the West Midlands – including Dudley South's Mike Wood – say the Government is ready to take action to tackle the crisis over illegal traveller camps.

It follows an emergency meeting with Communities Secretary Sajid Javid, which saw MPs discuss the

'desperate need' for a crackdown on unauthorised encampments across the region.

The meeting was arranged by Government Chief Whip Gavin Williamson, MP for South Staffs, including Kinver. It came after travellers left a trail of destruction across the Black Country this summer.

The meeting in the Houses of Parliament was attended by Mr Wood,

Aldridge-Brownhills MP Wendy Morton and Walsall North MP Eddie Hughes.

Describing the meeting with Mr Javid, who is MP for Bromsgrove as 'extremely encouraging', Mr Wood said: "It was good to see that not only was the Minister listening, but he was putting forward some ideas that the Government is looking at to make sure that communities are protected."

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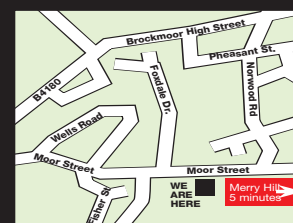
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JD Sports is hit with £60,000 safety fine

BGT star dances with class



Diversity's Ashley Banjo hosted a dance workshop Picture: Simon Hadley

YOUNGSTERS from a primary school twirled and twirled with dance star Ashley Banjo.

The frontman of dance group Diversity, who shot to fame after winning Britain's Got Talent in 2009, got little stars of the future moving at a special Disney-themed workshop at the school.

Pupils from Oldbury's Lightwoods Primary School joined the dancing star at a Birmingham studio for the one-off workshop ahead of Disney on Ice shows being staged from this week.

Youngsters crafted stories and choreography for the company's Fit to Dance initiative.

JD Sports Fashion PLC has been fined £60,000 after admitting fire safety breaches at a Black Country store.

The retailer pleaded guilty to six breaches related to its old premises in the Merry Hill Shopping Centre.

An internal fire risk assessment had flagged up problems 18 months before the store was visited by West Midlands Fire Service inspectors, a court heard.

Mr Mark Jackson, prosecuting, said fire inspection officers dropped in at the store as part of a routine pre-Christmas inspection in December 2015, but found fire escapes and exits blocked by items including crates and clothes rails.

Immediately after the inspection the obstructions were removed, Wolverhampton Magistrates Court heard. However, when inspectors returned two weeks later for an unannounced follow-up, they found 'the very same protected route and emergency exit blocked', Mr Jackson said.

A fire risk assessment from May 2014 had found an 'escape corridor to the rear is congested with packaging waste', the prosecutor said.

"It was plain that the company had been on notice of the problem at least 18 months prior to the December 2015 inspections," Mr Jackson said.

Miss Eleanor Sanderson, defending, said the fire safety breaches 'arose from difficulties in managing stock levels', which had resulted in 'an excess of materials'. Its other fire detection and prevention systems were all in full working order at the time.

JD Sports has since moved to new premises in Merry Hill which are 141 per cent bigger. Meanwhile improvements in stock ordering have also been made. And she said the firm was sincerely regretful for the fire safety breaches. District Judge Michael Wheeler fined the store £60,000 - £10,000 for each charge - and ordered it to pay court costs of £7,463.52.

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Hero driver uses van to stop runaway bus



Emergency services at the scene



The van and bus in Darlaston Road

Gary Welsh, right, with colleagues David Danks and Kevin Noble survey the damage

A HERO van man stopped a bus after its driver collapsed at the wheel – by using his own vehicle to block its path.

Gary Welsh, aged 51, was first alerted to the unconscious driver when the bus clipped his van and then hit two others.

He turned round and drove after the blue single decker, pulling up in front of it and putting on his handbrake.

The ground worker then got out of his van with his team and pulled the bus driver out before paramedics arrived. He was resuscitated and taken

to hospital, where he remains in a critical condition.

The drama took place on a 200-metre stretch of Darlaston Road in Wednesbury at 7.30am on Thursday.

Mr Welsh said: "We were driving up the road and the bus driver clipped us and took the mirror off. His head was down. I honked the horn but he didn't shift and we stopped and Kevin got out, thinking he would stop but he didn't."

"At first we thought he'd pinched the bus the way he was driving. We had to try and get him so I drove in front of him and put the handbrake on to

stop him and he crashed into the back of us." Mr Welsh, from Bloxwich, was on the way to work for G&L Contracts and was in the van with his brother, Nigel Welsh, 49, and colleagues, Kevin Noble, 39, and David Danks, 50.

He said: "We got out and saw he was slumped over the wheel and started to get him out. We managed to get him out and lay him on his side. But there was no response."

The driver had suffered a cardiac arrest while driving the empty bus. No-one was hurt. Bus firm, Thandi, of Abberley Street, in Smethwick, has been approached for a comment.

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Strictly time was
a dream for me



Karen Clifton, Simon Rimmer, Amy Dowden and Brian Conley during the results show for BBC One's Strictly Come Dancing. BLACK Country dancer Amy Dowden said she 'had a blast' with comedian Brian Conley after the pair were booted off Strictly Come Dancing.

Dowden, aged 26, who lives in Dudley, and veteran comic Conley became the latest pair to be voted off following a dance-off with Sunday Brunch presenter Simon Rimmer and Karen Clifton.

But Amy said they were pleased to have made it to week five. She said: "I have had the most incredible journey. I experienced things I'd dreamed of since I was a little girl. To be part of the biggest show on TV was amazing. Brian did an absolutely fantastic job. He was hilarious. This year's competition was so strong and we just made sure all the way through we had a blast."

The couple found themselves languishing at the bottom of the leaderboard on Saturday night after their jive performance earned them a meagre 16 points.

Right to Buy homes are not being replaced

COUNCILS in the Black Country are failing to replace homes sold through the Right to Buy scheme, new figures reveal.

Over the past two years, only one in 10 properties were replaced by Dudley Council, which sold 389 homes to council tenants and built 46 new ones.

While Wolverhampton council sold 457 homes under the scheme – but according to official Government figures only 30 were built as replacements, just 6.56 per cent.

Sandwell fared better building 167 new homes and selling 344 under the scheme – a replacement rate of almost 50 per cent.

Right to Buy gives tenants and some housing associations sizeable discounts if they want to buy the council home they are living in.

The scheme has proved controversial in recent years, with many councils warning they did not have the money to replace homes like-for-like.

Today's figures were revealed by Black Country Liberal Democrats through a Freedom of Information Act request. Rob Quarmbly,

By Pete Madeley

spokesman for the Lib Dems in Wolverhampton, said it was disgraceful all sold off homes were not being replaced.

"Councils in the Black Country have some of the worst records in the country on this issue and that is utterly shameful," he said.

"The Government must reform Right to Buy by allowing local councils to suspend it if they want, and provide enough funding to ensure all homes that are sold are replaced."

However, the Local Government Association said councils were being hampered by rules only allowing them to keep a third of all receipts from homes sold under Right to Buy.

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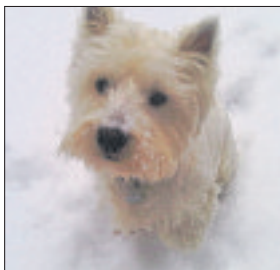
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It is going to be a difficult job for you readers to judge. Send us a



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Our Chronicle judges are simply looking for interesting pictures. We will select 10 of our favourite pictures and then it is up to our readers to decide on the winner.

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Brexit takes a back seat with focus on skills gap

BREXIT weariness is kicking in for Black Country bosses as they concentrate on the day-to-day problems of running their businesses.

The launch of a new Black Country campaign to support manufacturing companies found many concerned with the continuing skills gap and the need to get young people into engineering rather than the political wrangling around Brexit.

For most, the important issue was the impact of the weak pound, making imports more expensive but boosting the workload of those in the export supply chain.

Karen Hughes, of Brierly Hill-based Harco Engineering, said: "It's gone absolutely manic. Our order book is probably better than it has been in the last two years."

"Although most of our customers are in the UK, around 90 per cent of them export what they make. It went quiet after the Brexit vote, in June, but a few months later it suddenly picked up and hasn't stopped."

Adam Marshall, director general of the British Chambers of Commerce, said that while bigger corporations were looking at their contingency plans, most smaller companies were simply getting on with the day-to-day job of running their businesses.

"We are seeing Brexit weariness," he said. "Companies are seeing it as a distraction and saying they will deal with the consequences when they have some clarity. They are getting on with running their businesses."

While Brexit took something of a back seat, the need for clarity and a younger, better trained workforce were high on the list of priorities for the new Black Country manufacturing campaign, Making The Future, which is being led by the Black Country Chamber of Commerce.

Signal to make new trains



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Midlands-based Bombardier is to make 81 of the 107 new trains for the West Midlands Trains joint venture. It takes over routes operated by London Midlands from December 10.

The other trains will be made by Spanish company Construcciones y Auxiliars de Ferrocarriles (CAF).

Dutch firm Abellio and Japanese firms JR East and Mitsui, who are the partners in West Midlands Trains, said the trains will be made up of 413 carriages and cost £680 million as part of a near £1bn investment into the franchise.

The new Midlands-made Avenra trains will provide space for an extra 85,000 passengers on rush hour services into Birmingham and London and journeys will be faster and more comfortable.

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Plant burns bright with Carry Fire

ALBUMS

by Leon Burakowski

ROBERT Plant, the Black Country's Prince of Wails, returns with **Carry Fire**, his first album in three years.

It has to rate as one of his finest albums since the demise of Led Zeppelin as an ongoing project, sounding fresh but with echoes of former glories.

Surrounded by his expert ensemble of rock and folk musicians – The Sensational Shapeshifters – Plant kicks off with *The May Queen*, free-wheeling acoustic guitar and a vibe close to Zep's *Bron-Yr-Aur Stomp* and *Gallows Pole*.

The lower register of the 69-year-old rock god's voice means he has never sounded more vulnerable, mellow and warmly mortal. This adds a poignant quality to the dust-blown *Season's Song* and rolling elegiac *Dance With You Tonight*. There is a sense of foreboding on *A Way With Words* and *Heaven Sent*, the latter a song that Lane Del Ray would covet.

Carving Up The World, with its skiffle rhythm and nice blues licks, is a rocking riposte to Brexit and Trumpism. New World an anti-colonial sequel to *Immigrant Song* and *Bones Of Saints* rails against warmongers.

The world music element is brought to the fore on the title track with its North African and Spanish influences, both Moorish and very moreish. Plant duets with Chrissie Hynde on a psychedellic blues revamp of old rockabilly number *Bluebirds Over The Mountain*.



Robert Plant and the Shapeshifters sound fresh but also echo former glories

Plant brings his Shapeshifters for gigs at Wolverhampton Civic Hall on November 20 and Birmingham Symphony Hall on December 12.

On the cusp of the big time since their 2015 debut *My Love Is Cool* and a storming Glastonbury set last year, London indie outfit **Wolf Alice** have become the UK's premier alt-rock band.

Blending shoegaze guitar swirl with grungy hard rock, dream pop and even haunted folk, *Visions Of A Life*, second album from the four-piece fronted by Ellie Rowsell, matches the ferocity and energy of their live performances.

There are plenty of contrasts, such as the swamy riot grrrl blast of *Yuk Foo* (you can guess the sentiment) with the sweet yet steely vulnerability of Ellie's vocal on *Planet Hunter*.

Formidable *Cool* is a hard-hitting song about a date rape creep, the dark and claustrophobic *Sky Musings* use the fear of flying as a metaphor whilst *Space & Time* is a punk rocker for the mosh pits.

Don't Delete The Kisses is classic bitter-sweet *Wolf Alice* with half-spoken vocal and a potent chorus, and *Beautiful Unconventional* is a new indie anthem. *Sadboy* is a propulsive grower and *St Purple & Green* a slow burning ballad.

The psych-folk of *After The Zero Hour* and the title track, a rock epic with oriental feel, have a Led Zeppelin atmosphere.

Wolf Alice are in concert at Birmingham O2 Academy on November 16.

The Hawklords, featuring former Hawkwind members Harvey Bainbridge and Jerry Richards, are stuck in a time warp of a 1970s future past on new album *Six*.

But the retro synths and space rock riffs have a certain strangeness and charm, despite some clunky clichéd lyrics. Prog rocking epics *Nightside* and *Los Cavatina* are the highlights.

Catch The Hawklords and their famous lightshow at Robin's Bilston 2 venue on November 12.

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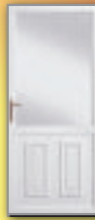
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Reflecting changing tastes in showroom

ANTIQUES AND COLLECTIBLES

with John Ridgway of Perry & Phillips



I'm often asked by people what sells best in the saleroom and the answer is always the same – items that are currently popular.

The antiques business reflects changing customer demand and items that sold for hundreds of pounds just a few years ago may not do anywhere near as well today if they are no longer considered popular or stylish.

At the moment, smaller and good quality pieces are definitely high on the buyer's wish-list and this was made very plain at our October sale.

One small item in particular stood out as being a major success, a chess set that sold for several hundred pounds more than its estimated guide price.

But it wasn't your average chess set – this was a Staunton set, complete with three and a half inch kings, in its original box and with original marquetry board, all in very good condition.

It sold for an extremely healthy £350 including buyer's premium, which was an excellent result given that its estimate was £40 to £60.



Another popular lot was a pair of stunning bronze Marley horses in excellent condition, sold for £600 including premium and was again one of those smaller pieces that are currently attracting both private buyers and dealers.

So unusual and good quality are the watchwords just now for saleable and small auction items, whether you are buying or selling – look out for nice carriage clocks, pieces of Moorcroft, silverware, Victorian tea caddys, quality jewellery, bronzes and so on.

And if selling, do check before you bring items in for valuation to ensure that they are in good condition as damage will almost always affect the price.

Our next sale will be our Christmas auction on December 5.

- Perry and Phillips hold valuation days, for sale items only, every Wednesday from 10am until 4pm.
- The next Perry and Phillips sale of antiques and collectables takes place at the Mill Street saleroom in Low Town, Bridgnorth, on Tuesday, December 5 – our Christmas auction. Viewing will be during the weekend and on Monday and also from 10am on auction day
- New sale bidders are advised to attend the sale-room early on auction day to register and be allocated a bidding number.
- Perry and Phillips hold sales on the first Tuesday of every other month.

Starting young with outfits for Halloween



Children love Halloween outfits

I CONTINUE this week with the subject of my previous article on little ones clothing.

My five-month old granddaughter went to a "superhero" baby sensory session last week, the babies were dressed in mini Superman, Batman, Spiderman, Wonder Woman and even Gamora from Guardians of the Galaxy costumes. They were all clad in the latest available outfits and included hats and footwear, the photos were great for the family album.

I am amazed at what is available, the supermarkets have full Halloween outfits from newborn upwards, fluffy pumpkin babygrows in orange, white ghost and mummy outfits and even a purple and black Dracula with miniature cape – hopefully these babies will not be out trick or treating with their older siblings.

There are also dinosaurs, gnomes and scarecrow outfits to choose from, don't forget the Christmas Eve elf ensemble... and they are generally bought for wearing on one day only. You can of course dress the dog to match too, a total family look?

It feeds their imagination, lovely primary

STYLE FOCUS

with Janet Timmis



colours and cartoon logos, even from a few weeks old they have music and animation on You Tube and Disney films en masse, by the time they can talk these characters are part of their everyday life. Channelled correctly they can learn so much.

It isn't just superheroes – the baby outfits sport animals faces, complete with eyes, nose, and whiskers, soft toys to match the garments and cosy coats in soft fleece with ears on the hoods.

The garments get more elaborate with embroidered collars, ribbon trim and graphic prints. We dress our children in such amazing outfits, jeggings, denim jackets and tiny baseball caps.

Babies wardrobes are packed full, an outfit or maybe more than one, for every day, growing out of them and the space quickly being filled with something new... and for special

occasions girly glitter and sequin is the order of the day or a tux and bow tie for the boys, no longer just for a glamorous adult evening out.

Luckily, we have a Nutmeg store coming to the updated Morrisons in Market Drayton but also look at Tesco and Asda's offering. Matalan has a vast range of choice, however for something different check out Lucy & Lola on Facebook, bespoke clothing for little ones. Don't forget to visit the Tin Shed, also in Market Drayton, for factory outlet value items.

This wide choice of adult themed and elaborate baby and children's clothing is a relatively recent phenomenon and it is now moving towards designer trend influenced garments based on a six-month turnaround, thank goodness children grow so quickly and allow us to purchase a continuous supply of new clothing and accessories, including bibs, blankets, muslin cloths and toys.

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People of all ages can be affected by osteoporosis



Weight-bearing exercise – even walking – is a good way to keep your bones healthy

Look after your bones – no matter how old you are



Make sure you get plenty of calcium

HEALTHY bones underpin – quite literally – so much of our overall health and fitness, but it's easy to take them for granted.

Anyone can get osteoporosis – which causes weakened, fragile, fracture-prone bones – but women tend to be most affected, and the risk generally increases with age.

According to the National Osteoporosis Society, one in two females and one in five men over 50 experience fractures, mostly due to low bone strength.

So, what can we do to look after our bone health? While osteoporosis might seem like something you only need to worry about once you reach a certain age, it's never too early to start looking after yourself – in fact, the earlier the better. Here's the experts' advice for looking after your bones, whatever your age...

WHEN YOU'RE VERY YOUNG

Our bones stop growing after a certain point, so our childhood and teens – plus our 20s, to a degree – play an important role when it comes to developing strong bones for life.

Professor David Reid, consultant rheumatologist and osteoporosis specialist at 25 Harley Street (25harleystreet.co.uk), points

Report by Abi Jackson

out that "more than 50 per cent of the risk" comes from genetics – but lifestyle measures are certainly worthwhile, as they'll help ensure you make the most of what nature's given you.

"The message is, 'Look after your bones'," states Reid, who says there are three key points here, starting with "weight-bearing exercise, to maximise your potential bone mass".

Unsure what weight-bearing exercise means? Not to be confused with weightlifting, it's basically any exercise where you're working against gravity – so things like walking, dancing, jogging, rather than things like swimming and cycling, where you've got the water or a bike supporting your weight.

Of course, calcium is also crucial for healthy bones, and Reid says fad diets – especially those which advise cutting dairy products and fats – can be a concern in terms of teenage girls, who may be compromising their future bone health.

IN YOUR 30S AND 40S

"Losing bone density is a normal part of the ageing process, and it will begin to fall from the age of 30. Some people lose bone density much faster than others, and this

can lead to osteoporosis," says Damian McClelland, clinical director of Musculoskeletal Services at Bupa (bupa.co.uk).

"There are steps young women can take to guard against osteoporosis, such as maintaining a balanced, nutritious diet, which includes calcium-rich foods, such as cheese, sardines and leafy green vegetables like kale."

Reid explains that, while your body will have stopped building bone mass by this stage, "you can certainly do the best you can in terms of maintaining it". Again, plenty of calcium and vitamin D are essential (McClelland suggests topping up your dietary levels with "egg yolks and fatty fish such as salmon"), along with regular exercise.

IN YOUR 50S, 60S AND BEYOND

"Women lose bone density rapidly in the first few years after the menopause," says McClelland. "There are no symptoms in the early stages of bone loss, however, once someone's bones have been weakened by osteoporosis, they may experience loss of height, a stooped posture, or back pain caused by a fractured or collapsed vertebra."

Reid suggests women have a good chat with their GP about managing the menopause, and whether hormone replacement therapy might be an option for them.

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I'm having a bit of a second wind now

He's one of Britain's most larger than life entertainers. Actor, TV presenter and showman Christopher Biggins has led a unique career on the stage and is one of the nation's best loved panto stars and reality TV show contestants.

He will talk about his career this afternoon when he visits Wolverhampton's Grand Theatre for An Afternoon With.

The show will be presented by BBC Midlands Today's Nick Owen and fans can take their seat a unique opportunity to get up close and personal with Biggins in the beautiful Grade II Listed auditorium.

Christopher is well known for his performances in pantomime, his most famous role is that of Widow Twankey in Aladdin. He last appeared in a Wolverhampton pantomime at the Grand Theatre in 2010.

His theatre roles have included The Baker in Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat, Herod in Jesus Christ Superstar, and 18 months at the London Palladium in the stage adaptation of Chitty Chitty Bang Bang.

In 2017, he received the Lifetime Achievement Award at the Great British Pantomime Awards.

Christopher was born in Oldham, Lancashire, England and raised in Salisbury, Wiltshire, where he took elocution lessons and participated in local drama groups, leading to a job at the local repertory theatre.

He is best known as a comedy actor, appearing as the regular character Lukewarm in the popular situation comedy Porridge (1974-77) starring Ronnie Barker. Other comedy shows he appeared in include Whatever Happened to the Likely Lads? (1973) and Some Mothers Do 'Ave 'Em (1973, 1978). In 1976 he played dramatic role as Nero in the BBC dramatisation of I, Claudius by Robert Graves, having been selected for the role partly on the strength of a television commercial in which he had played a Roman emperor presiding over the games.

He also appeared in the BBC's Poldark in 1977. Despite these serious roles, his co-hosting of Surprise, Surprise and hosting children's gameshow On Safari (1982-1985) for TVS led to him being typecast as a "bubbly personality"; when asked in by an interviewer if he resented that, he replied: "No, not a bit of it. I'm perfectly happy being me, thank you, and I happen to know that I am afforded enormous respect from everybody I know. And anyway, I'm having something of a second wind now. I've reached the age where all kinds of roles are opening up to me."

On children's television he had a regular role as supermarket manager Adam Painting in the children's television programme Rentaghost (1978-1983) also played Reverend Whiting in Southern Television's Brendon Chase, produced in 1980. In the early 1980s he hosted children's gameshow On Safari, a bizarre afternoon game show with a jungle-themed studio set.

Christopher appeared in the Big Finish Productions audio drama The One Doctor, based on the television series Doctor Who. His film roles include The Rocky Horror Picture Show (1975) and "The Baker" in the 1999 Video Version of Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat. His theatre roles have included The Baker in Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat, Herod in Jesus Christ Superstar, and in the stage adaptation of Chitty Chitty Bang Bang where he was teamed to great success opposite Louise Gold for 18 months at the London Palladium.

Christopher appeared as the regular character Lukewarm in the situation comedy Porridge



(1974-1977) starring Ronnie Barker. Other comedy shows he appeared in include Whatever Happened to the Likely Lads? (1973) and Some Mothers Do 'Ave 'Em (1973, 1978). He played Nero in the BBC dramatisation of I, Claudius (1976), from the novels by Robert Graves, having been selected for the role partly on the strength of a television commercial in which he had played a Roman emperor presiding over the games. He also appeared in the BBC's Poldark (1977) as the Reverend Osborne Whitworth, and the TV miniseries Masada (1981).

On children's television, he had a regular role as department store owner Adam Painting in the children's television programme Rentaghost (1978-1983) and also played Reverend Whiting in Southern Television's Brendon Chase, produced in 1980. In the early 1980s he hosted children's game show On Safari, which had a jungle-themed studio set.

He was the subject of This Is Your Life in 1999 when he was surprised by Michael Aspel at the Theatre Royal, Brighton. He appeared in The One Doctor, one of Big Finish Productions' audio dramas based on the television series Doctor Who.

He took part in the seventh series of I'm a Celebrity... Me Out of Here! in 2007. He was eventually voted the winner of the show on 30 November 2007. He took part in an episode of Celebrity Come Dine With Me, first shown on Channel 4 on 15 February 2009. He won £1,000 for his chosen charity.

In 2009, he played himself as a pantomime director in the BBC Two sitcom, Psychoville.

In 2010, he was a celebrity guest

I've reached the age where all kinds of roles are opening up to me

team captain on an episode of What Do Kids Know? along with Rufus Hound, Joe Swash and Sara Cox on Watch while later that year he played God in the BBC adult puppet comedy show Mongrels.

In May 2011, he starred in the second series of Channel 4's Celebrity Five Go To... in which the celebrities visited South Africa.

In 2014, he took part in the celebrity cookery programme Celebrity MasterChef on BBC One. In 2014, he took part in a celebrity edition of Catchphrase. He voices It's Not Me, It's You on Channel 5.

On 28 July 2016, Biggins entered the Celebrity Big Brother house to participate in its eighteenth series. He was chosen by the public to take part in the first secret mission. He was removed from the house on Day 9. The show's producers stated that Biggins had made "a number of comments capable of causing great offence to housemates and the viewing public." Forty-four people complained to Ofcom about comments Christopher made, but Ofcom ruled that he was not in breach of broadcasting rules.

● For more entertainment news and reviews see The Ticket in your Express & Star every Friday.



William The Conqueror



Ruarri's roots – back to before life got in the way

BLENDING American traditional music and grunge, trio William The Conqueror have broken out from their Cornish roots to cause a buzz on the music scene.

Snapped up by promoters Metropolis/Live Nation, the band that in late summer released debut album Proud Disturber Of The Peace have been described as a blend of stomping country music and stoner rock.

They are in concert at Birmingham Glee Club on Wednesday, November 1.

The band is fronted by former folk singer-songwriter Ruarri Joseph, who walked away from a major record deal to pursue a rock direction.

He said: "I spent a lot of time on the folk circuit just by virtue of the fact I had a beard and an acoustic guitar."

"It paid the bills but didn't feel like I was following my creative instincts. I reached a point when I thought my younger self, that had cut his teeth in punk and rock bands, would've been disappointed in what I'd become – so William started as a way to pay homage to that youth that got sidelined when life got in the way."

The band, that is completed by multi-instrumentalists Harry Harding and Naomi Holmes, have also been touring with Danny & The Champions Of The World.

Punk and protest anthems for youth



Former teenage runaway Louise Distras turned her back on bullies in her home town of Wakefield to pick up a guitar and channel her anger into becoming a leading light of the new punk scene.

Tipped as one of Kerrang's stars of 2017, this Nirvana fan creates anthems of love and fury for a let-down generation, finding common cause with the spirit of '77 and such bands as The Clash and Sex Pistols.

"I'm standing up for the

disenfranchised kids, who get picked on at school, the kids outside the box," says Louise.

Having received a helping hand from New Model Army and Billy Bragg, who recognise a protest singer when they see one, she had played the Leftfield Stage at Glastonbury.

SINGLE

She has also performed alongside Mick Jones and Glen Matlock to raise money in Joe Strummer's memory. She has also toured with the Buzzcocks and The Damned.

She won acclaim for her single Love Me the Way I Am/Bullets and debut album Dreams from the Factory Floor, and recently released new single Outside Of You. She describes the latter as "fighting to be yourself in a world that wants you to be something you're not".

She is planning to release her second album early in 2018. It will, she says "take the songs to a new level with harder hitting lyrics and harder hitting concepts."

She brings her tour with Itch (The Blues King) to Wolverhampton's Slade Rooms on Thursday,

Shout out it's a Grand time for Lulu

It's a big week for music one-nighters at Wolverhampton Grand Theatre. Lulu is in concert on Sunday.

She first had a hit more than 50 years ago with Shout. Over the years she's done Eurovision and has collaborated with artists from David Bowie to Take That. Other concerts include Rick Wakeman with his Piano Portraits on Monday, Eagles tribute Talon on Tuesday, top Elvis tribute Gordon Hendricks with The Spirit of Aloha in Concert on Wednesday and soul greats The Stylistics on November 2.



Shadow of War over Middle-earth

Middle-earth: Shadow of War, the epic sequel to award-winning fantasy game Middle-earth: Shadow of Mordor, has been released for Xbox One, PlayStation4, Windows 10 PC and Steam. Returning to the world of JRR Tolkien, it is set between the events of The Hobbit and The Lord of the Rings, with ranger Talon and elf lord Celebrimbor pitched against Sauron's orc armies. "Monolith Productions has advanced its innovative artificial intelligence technology, their Nemesis System, from Middle-earth: Shadow of Mordor, to create a gameplay experience unlike any other," says David Haddad, President of Warner Bros Interactive Entertainment. "Players of Middle-earth: Shadow of War will encounter a totally personalised world that remembers their every move, along with a compelling story."

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Warwick Davis

Talking Pictures: Harry Potter (BBC2, 8.30pm)
Actor Warwick Davis explores the BBC archives to tell the story of how JK Rowling's Harry Potter novels transitioned from the page to the silver screen. Over the course of 10 years, all seven of Rowling's main Potter books were brought to life for cinemagoers, making stars of Daniel Radcliffe, Rupert Grint and Emma Watson, the young actors who played the lead roles in the series. Davis - who starred alongside the teens as Professor Flitwick and Griphook the goblin - showcases rarely seen footage and interviews as he goes behind-the-scenes on the franchise that became one of the biggest in cinema history.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **10.00** Saturday Kitchen Live. **11.30** The Hairy Bikers' Comfort Food. (R) **12.00** Football Focus. **1.00** BBC News: Weather. **1.15** Rugby League World Cup. **3.00** Film: Madagascar: Escape 2 Africa. (2008) Animated comedy sequel, with the voice of Ben Stiller. **4.20** Final Score. **5.30** BBC News. **5.40** Regional Programme. **5.45** Pointless Celebrities.
6.35 **Strictly Come Dancing.** Spiders, witches, broomsticks and ghosts take up residence in the ballroom, as the dancing contest's traditional Halloween special arrives. Entering the sixth weekend of the contest, the pack of couples has been whittled down to 11, and judges Shirley Ballas, Darcey Bussell, Bruno Tonioli and Craig Revel Horwood will be looking for the pro-celebrity duos to deliver suitably spooky performances if they are to earn the highest scores and boost their chances of avoiding the dance-off on Sunday. Tess Daly and Claudia Winkleman present.
8.20 **Casualty.**
9.10 **Gunpowder.** The King's network of spies begins to close the net around the Catholic conspirators, and while Catesby and Wintour seek to recruit more allies to their cause in mainland Europe, Lord Cecil puts the pressure on Lady Anne to reveal her cousin's whereabouts. On their return to London, the plotters convene for the first time, and decide their moment to strike must be November 5, at the opening of Parliament. However, they must first secure gunpowder, and when a threat of detection leads to a bloody clash, Catesby puts his life on the line in an all-or-nothing mission at the Tower of London.
10.10 **BBC News**
10.30 **Match of the Day.** Gary Lineker presents highlights of the latest Premier League matches, including Manchester United v Tottenham Hotspur at Bournemouth v Chelsea.
11.55 **The NFL Show.** Mark Chapman looks at the major stories shaping the NFL world, joined by former players Osi Umenyiora and Jason Bell.
12.25 **Film: Fright Night.** (2011) **1.05** (GMT) Weather for the Week Ahead. **1.10** BBC News.

BBC2

6.15 How We Won the War. (R) **6.45** Animal Park Summer Special. (R) **7.30** Naomi's Nightmares of Nature. **8.00** Deadly 60. (R) **8.50** Show Me What You're Made Of. (R) **9.00** Saturday Mash-Up! **11.00** Nature's Wildest Events. (R) **12.00** Rick Stein's Long Weekends. (R) **1.00** Bargain Hunt. (R) **2.00** Northern Italy Unpacked. (R) **4.30** Flog It! (R) **4.00** Mastermind. (R) **4.30** The Big Family Cooking Showdown. (R) **5.30** Gardeners' World. (R)
6.30 **Who Do You Think You Are?** Author JK Rowling investigates her mother's French roots, finding an ancestor who triumphed against the odds, and discovering how war almost transformed her family's identity. (R)
7.30 **Front Row.** Historian Mary Beard visits The Roman Singularity exhibition at Sir John Soane's Museum in London, and David Gilmour speaks about his recent film, before performing in the studio.
8.00 **Dad's Army.** A daring bid to rescue Walker and Godfrey from a stricken pumping station ends with Mainwaring and his whole platoon trapped and facing the prospect of drowning. (R)
8.30 **Talking Pictures: Harry Potter.** Actor Warwick Davis explores the BBC archives to tell the story of how JK Rowling's Harry Potter novels transitioned from the page to the silver screen.
9.00 **Harry Potter: A History of Magic.** Documentary exploring the myths, traditions and everyday artefacts that inspired JK Rowling as she wrote the Harry Potter novels, via a new exhibition at The British Library.
10.00 **QI XL.** Nish Kumar, Holly Walsh and Cariad Lloyd join regular panellist Alan Davies and host Sandi Toksvig for an unconventional look at multiple organisms.
10.45 **Later - with Jools Holland.** Another chance to catch the weekly music programme, featuring Stereophonics, Hurray for the Ruff Raff, Moses Sumney, Richard Thompson, Hiromi and the White Buffalo.
11.50 **Film: Flying Blind.** (2012) A drone engineer falls in love with a student, only to find the security services suspect him of being involved in terrorism. Drama, with Helen McCrory and Najib Oudghiri.
1.15 **Film: Untouchable.** (2011)

ITV

6.00 CITV: Sooty. **6.10** The Aquabats! Super Show! (R) **6.35** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **6.45** Super 4. (R) **7.00** Mission Empoyable. (R) **7.05** Oddbods. (R) **7.10** Ultimate Spider-Man: Web Warriors. **7.30** Scrambled!: Scrambled! **7.35** Scrambled!: The Tom and Jerry Show. (R) **7.50** Scrambled!: Fangbone. (R) **8.10** Scrambled!: The Powerpuff Girls. (R) **8.30** Scrambled!: Thunderbirds Are Go. **9.05** Scrambled!: Adventure Time. **9.25** ITV News. **9.30** Saturday Morning with James Martin. **11.25** Gino's Italian Escape - Islands in the Sun. (R) **11.55** Save Money: Good Diet. (R) **12.55** ITV News: Weather. **1.00** The X Factor - Judges' Houses. (R) **3.00** Thunderbirds Are Go. (R) **3.25** **Film: Overboard.** (1987) **5.30** The Cruise. (R)
6.00 **Paul O'Grady: For the Love of Dogs.** The comedian meets a German shepherd puppy rejected by its mother at birth, a frisky Jack Russell having trouble using his recent of his back legs and an old timer that lacks confidence. (R)
6.25 **Regional Programme:** Weather.
6.35 **ITV News:** Weather.
6.45 **New You've Been Framed!** Harry Hill narrates another selection of comical mishaps, including a cat's attack on some birthday cards, and teenager's heavy machinery mistake.
7.15 **Ninja Warrior UK.** New series. Ben Shephard, Rochelle Humes and Chris Kamara return, as more competitors from across the UK aim to conquer the course and scale the heights of Mount Midoriyama.
8.20 **The X Factor.** Dermot O'Leary presents the first live studio round, as the contestants hope to retain the favour of judges Simon Cowell, Louis Walsh, Nicole Scherzinger and Sharon Osbourne.
10.20 **The Jonathan Ross Show.** Jonathan welcomes R&B singer Tina Turner, UFC star Conor McGregor, sports presenter Clare Balding and actor Andrew Garfield to the studio. Plus, Plan B performs.
11.25 **ITV News:** Weather.
11.45 **Film: Airplane!** (1980) A traumatised war veteran must face his fear and land an airliner when the crew are incapacitated by food poisoning. Spoof disaster movie, starring Robert Hays and Leslie Nielsen.
1.25 **Jackpot247.** **3.00** (GMT) The Hungry Sailors. (R)

CHANNEL 4

6.20 Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **6.45** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **7.10** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **7.40** Frasier. (R) **8.05** Frasier. (R) **8.30** Frasier. (R) **9.05** The Big Bang Theory. **9.30** The Big Bang Theory. **10.00** The Big Bang Theory. **10.50** The Simpsons. (R) **11.20** The Simpsons. (R) **11.50** Come Dine with Me. (R) **12.25** Come Dine with Me. (R) **12.55** Come Dine with Me. (R) **1.25** Come Dine with Me. (R) **2.00** Come Dine with Me. (R) **2.30** A Place in the Sun: Winter Sun. (R) **3.30** A Place in the Sun: Winter Sun. (R) **4.30** Best Bad Plans. **5.35** Location, Location, Location. (R)
6.30 **Channel 4 News.**
7.00 **Egypt's Great Pyramid: The New Evidence.** Documentary shedding light on a fresh discovery at the foot of Egypt's Great Pyramid, which may explain how the ancient Egyptians were capable of building such a vast structure without the aid of computers of complex machinery. At the base of the monument, archaeologists have uncovered a relic of Khufu, the pharaoh whose remains were interred in the Great Pyramid. What they found was a ceremonial boat, laid out in "flat-pack" form, which may prove to be the key in explaining the crucial role ships and water played in the pyramids' construction. (R)
8.00 **Hidden Britain by Drone.** Part two of two. Tony Robinson presents aerial footage of a shipyard where aircraft carriers are built and a shipwreck on the Kent coast that is filled with explosives. (R)
9.00 **When Harry Met Meghan: A Royal Romance.** Interviews with friends, colleagues and royal experts shed light on the romance between US actress Meghan Markle and Prince Harry.
10.00 **Formula 1 Mexican Grand Prix Qualifying Highlights.** Steve Jones presents action from the battle for pole position at the 18th round of the season, which took place at Autodromo Hermanos Rodriguez in Mexico City.
11.40 **Film: Source Code.** (2011) A pilot investigates a bombing by having his mind transferred into a victim for the last eight minutes of his life. Sci-fi thriller, with Jake Gyllenhaal and Michelle Monaghan.
1.10 **Film: Animal Kingdom.** (2010) **2.05** (GMT) The Last Leg. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake! **9.45** Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. (R) **10.20** The Gadget Show. (R) **11.10** Police Interceptors. (R) **12.05** Police Interceptors. (R) **1.05** The A-Team. (R) **2.05** The A-Team. (R) **3.10** The A-Team. (R) **4.10** Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away. (R) **5.10** Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away. (R)
6.10 **Film: Mosquito Squadron.** (1969) An RAF pilot leads a special mission behind enemy lines to destroy a secret German weapon. In the months preceding the operation, the airman tries to comfort the grieving wife of a friend who went missing in action, but finds himself developing romantic feelings for her. Second World War drama, David McCallum and Suzanne Neve. Edited for language and violence.
7.10 **5 News Update.**
7.15 **Film: Mosquito Squadron.** (1969) Concluded.
8.00 **Conspiracy: Pearl Harbor Cover-Up.** The 1941 attack by the Imperial Japanese Navy Air Service on the US naval base marked an undisputed turning point in the Second World War, but this documentary considers whether it was actually masterminded by US president Franklin D Roosevelt. (R)
8.55 **5 News Weekend.**
9.00 **Football on 5: The Championship.** Colin Murray introduces highlights from the weekend's games in the Championship, including Sheffield Wednesday v Barnsley at Hillsborough, and Leeds United v Sheffield United at Elland Road.
10.00 **Football on 5: Goal Rush.** Colin Murray introduces all the goals from Leagues One and Two, including Bury v Doncaster Rovers, Oldham Athletic v Scunthorpe United, and Luton Town v Coventry City.
10.30 **Film: 2012.** (2009) As the human race faces extinction in a global cataclysm, a writer tries to get his family to the last safe refuge. Disaster movie, starring John Cusack and Chiwetel Ejiofor.
1.20 **FIA World Rally Championship Highlights.** **1.50** SuperCasino. Live interactive gaming. **3.10** (GMT) Paddington Station **3.17.** (R) **4.00** The World's Greatest Bridges. (R) **4.50** Great Scientists. (R) **5.20** Wildlife SOS. (R) **5.45** Chinese Food in Minutes. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Four
7.00 The Inca: Masters of the Clouds **8.00** Wild China **9.00** Beck: The Hospital Murders **10.25** Beck: Gunvald **11.55** Top of the Pops: 1984 **12.30** Sound of Cinema: The Music That Made the Movies **1.35** The Inca: Masters of the Clouds **1.35** (GMT) Wild China **2.35** Close
ITV2
12.20 Take Me Out **1.30** Harry Hill's Alien Fun Capsule **2.00** You've Been Framed! **Gold 2.30** The Smurfs: The Legend of Smurfy Hollow **3.00** The X Factor - Judges' Houses **5.00** Film: The Haunted Mansion (2003) **6.00** FYI Daily **6.05** Film: The Haunted Mansion (2003) **6.45** Film: The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers (2002) **7.45** FYI Daily **7.50** Film: The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers (2002) **11.05** Family Guy **12.05** American Dad! **1.00** Timewasters **1.30** Film: Horrible Bosses (2011) **1.35** (GMT) FYI Daily
ITV3
11.45 Wycliffe **12.50** Foyle's War **5.00** Midsomer Murders **11.00** The Syndicate **12.05** Lewis **1.10** Wycliffe **2.00** (GMT) ITV3 Nightscreen **2.30** Teleshopping
ITV4
11.20 Fishing Impossible **12.25** Shed and Buried **1.30** ITV Racing Live. Coverage of today's race meetings at Cheltenham, Doncaster and Newbury. **4.15** Football's Greatest: Cristiano Ronaldo **4.35** Pawn Stars **6.00** Storage Wars **7.00** Darts: European Championship Live. Coverage of second-round matches. **11.00** Film: Reservoir Dogs (1992) **12.00** FYI Daily **12.05** Film: Reservoir Dogs (1992) **1.05** The Sweeney **1.10** (GMT) Ironside **2.05** The Classic Car Show
E4
12.00 Film: Toy Story OF TERROR! (2013) **12.30** The Goldbergs **3.00** Don't Tell the Bride **4.00** The Great British Bake Off **5.15** The Great British Bake Off: An Extra Slice **6.00** The Big Bang Theory **9.00** Film: AVP: Alien vs Predator (2004) **10.55** Gogglebox **1.05** Rude Tube **1.10** (GMT) Brooklyn Nine-Nine **1.35** Brooklyn Nine-Nine **2.00** Tattoo Fixers
Film4
11.00 Marmaduke (2010) **1.00** The House of Magic (2013) **2.40** Bridge to Terabithia (2007) **4.30** Endless Love (2014) **6.35** A Good Year (2006) **8.55** Film: Interview Special **9.00** Taken 2 (2012) **10.50** No One Lives (2012) **12.30** Aaaaaaaah! (2015) **1.10** (GMT) A Field in England (2013) **3.00** Close

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CHOICE



Alfie Boe

Ball and Boe: Back Together (ITV, 9pm)
Tenor Alfie Boe and Award-winning stage performer Michael Ball reunite following the success of their recent album and TV special for another concert, featuring performances of some of their favourite songs. The show features renditions of As If We Never Said Goodbye, He Lives In You, The Prayer and You're The Voice, as well as a special sing-off in which they must perform some unexpected numbers. The duo are joined on stage by guests including singer-songwriter Imelda May and comedian Jason Manford.

BBC1

6.00 (GMT) Breakfast. 7.30 Match of the Day. (R) 9.00 The Andrew Marr Show. 10.00 Sunday Morning Live. 11.00 Regional Programme. 12.15 Bargain Hunt. (R) 1.00 BBC News: Weather. 1.15 Homes Under the Hammer. (R) 2.15 Money for Nothing. (R) 3.00 Escape to the Country. (R) 3.45 Points of View. 4.00 Songs of Praise. 4.35 Eat Well for Less? (R) 5.35 BBC News. 5.50 Regional Programme.
6.00 The Countryfile Ramble for Children in Need. Reports on fundraising walks across the UK, featuring children and their families supported by the money raised. John Craven joins a group from YMCA Lurgan at Castledovellan Park in Northern Ireland, Anita Rani accompanies a boy supported by Maggie's Cancer Centre on the beaches of Morar in Scotland. Ellie Harrison visits the Brecon Beacons. Adam Henson walks through Bristol, and Matt Baker explores Dartmoor National Park.
7.15 Strictly Come Dancing: The Results. Tess Daly and Claudia Winkleman present the results of the viewers' votes from last night's Halloween special, before two couples compete in a dance-off. With music from Steps.
8.00 Blue Planet II. New series. Marine life around the world, from dolphins and tusk fish in a tropical coral reef to walruses struggling to cope with the impact of climate change on the polar north.
9.00 The Last Post. The NLF want to make a trade. Alison feels conflicted over her marriage. Yusra smuggles a coded message, and Joe obeys orders.
10.00 BBC News. 10.20 Regional Programme. 10.30 Match of the Day 2. Mark Chapman reviews the latest Premier League action, featuring Leicester City v Everton at the King Power Stadium and Brighton & Hove Albion v Southampton at the Amex Stadium.
11.30 The Women's Football Show. A look at the biggest issues in the women's game, focusing on matters at both club and international level.
12.05 City Boy Fight Club. Documentary about unregulated boxing clubs for financial workers. **12.25 Weather for the Week Ahead. 12.30 BBC News.**

BBC2

6.05 (GMT) Coast. (R) 6.35 Great British Garden Revival. (R) 7.35 Gardeners' World. (R) 8.35 Countryfile. (R) 9.30 Saturday Kitchen Best Bites. 11.00 Mary Berry's Foolproof Cooking. (R) 11.30 My Life on a Plate. (R) 12.15 MOTD2 Extra. 1.00 NFL Live. Cleveland Browns v Minnesota Vikings (Kick-off 1.30pm). 5.00 Rugby League World Cup.
6.00 LNG: Teaching Awards 17/18. Naga Munchetty and Sean Fletcher present the awards show celebrating the UK's best teachers. Among the celebrities presenting awards are Call the Midwife's Jenny Agutter, Olympian Heather Stanning, Strictly Come Dancing judge Shirley Ballas, EastEnders' Diane Parish and presenter Rick Edwards.
7.00 Top Gear. Chris Harris and Rory Reid take a road trip across Cuba in a pair of second-hand sports cars. Matt LeBlanc test drives the Mercedes-AMG GT R supercar, and Ross Noble takes to the track as this week's Star in a Reasonably Fast Car. (R)
8.00 Robot Wars. Six more robots compete in the second heat, with last year's champions returning to face five brand new challengers. Presented by Dara Ó Briain and Angela Scanlon.
9.00 Louis Theroux: Talking to Anorexia. The reporter meets patients at two of London's largest eating disorder facilities, following them through a daily routine of scheduled eating, weigh-ins and group therapy.
10.00 Snowfall. Teddy travels to Nicaragua in search of Alejandro, and is exposed to the horrors of the conflict sweeping the nation and the conditions the Contras are fighting under.
10.45 Mock the Week. James Acaster, Angela Barnes, Kerry Godliman, Nish Kumar and Glenn Moore join host Dara Ó Briain and regular Hugh Dennis for the topical comedy show. (R)
11.15 Film: What We Do in the Shadows. (2014) Premiere. A documentary crew follows a group of vampires sharing a house as they try to get to grips with the modern world. Horror comedy, with Jemaine Clement and Taika Waititi.
12.40 Sign Zone: Question Time. Topical debate from Portsmouth, chaired by David Dimbleby. (R)

ITV

6.00 (GMT) CITV: (GMT) Sooty. 6.10 The Aquabats! Super Show! (R) 6.35 Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) 6.45 Super 4. (R) 7.00 Mission Emplayable. (R) 7.05 Oddbods. (R) 7.10 Thunderbirds Are Go. (R) 7.30 Scrambled!: Scrambled! 7.35 Scrambled!: The Tom and Jerry Show. (R) 7.50 Scrambled!: Mr Bean: The Animated Series. (R) 8.10 Scrambled!: Ben 10. (R) 8.30 Scrambled!: Be Cool, Scooby-Doo! (R) 9.05 Scrambled!: Adventure Time. 9.25 ITV News. 9.30 Australian Wilderness with Ray Mears. (R) 10.00 Peston on Sunday. 11.00 Amazing Animal Births. (R) 11.25 Bigheads. (R) 12.25 ITV News: Weather. 12.40 The X Factor. (R) 2.30 Film: Nanny McPhee. (2005) Period fantasy, starring Emma Thompson. 4.25 Your Song. (R) 5.25 Regional Programme ; Weather. 5.40 ITV News: Weather.
6.00 Tipping Point: Lucky Stars. Ben Shephard invites celebrities to take part in a special edition of the quiz show, in which contestants Bob Mortimer, Amy Childs and Alistair Stewart answer questions to win turns on an arcade-style machine. Dropping tokens down a choice of four chutes, they hope to knock piles of them off a moving shelf – and the more they collect, the better their chances of collecting the £20,000 prize for their selected charity. Last in the series.
7.00 The X Factor. The results of the viewers' vote are announced, and one of the acts is eliminated from the contest. Presented by Dermot O'Leary, and featuring a performance from a special musical guest.
9.00 Ball and Boe: Back Together. Michael Ball and Alfie Boe perform together in a special concert featuring some of their favourite songs. The duo are joined on stage by Imelda May and Jason Manford.
10.00 ITV News: Weather. 10.20 Peston on Sunday. Political magazine, presented by Robert Peston and Allegra Stratton. (R)
11.15 Bear's Mission. Bear Grylls teaches the boxer some alternative survival skills, taking him to the notorious Commando Ridge in Cornwall, and providing nutrition in the form of a rotted sheep's leg. (R)
12.10 Jackpot247. 3.00 Motorsport UK. 3.50 ITV Nightscreen. 5.05 The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R)

CHANNEL 4

**6.00 (GMT) Kevin Can Wait. 6.25 Kevin Can Wait. 6.45 Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) 7.10 Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) 7.35 Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) 8.00 Frasier. (R) 8.25 Frasier. (R) 9.00 Frasier. (R) 9.30 Sunday Brunch. 12.30 The Simpsons. (R) 12.55 The Simpsons. (R) 1.25 Film: Paranorman. (2012) Animated adventure, with the voice of Kodi Smit-McPhee. 3.20 Film: Hocus Pocus. (1993) Supernatural Disney comedy, starring Bette Midler. 5.15 The Great British Bake Off. (R)
6.30 Channel 4 News. 7.00 Escape. Five engineers with different specialist skills are marooned on a desert island for the latest survival challenge. They must build a vehicle to escape in using only the wreckage from a tug boat and a small passenger ferry – but physical and emotional exhaustion takes its toll as food and water run out. With Ant Middleton.
8.00 Great Canal Journeys. New series. Timothy West and Prunella Scales return to their canal boat for another series of journeys, beginning in the Norfolk Broads. This is the first time the couple have visited the area, and they learn about the unique way of life that has developed over the centuries in this network of slow-moving rivers, fens, marshes and waterlogged woodlands. Their trip takes them to a marshman's cottage, the ruins of St Benet's Abbey, and a local Norfolk wherry, and brings to mind events from the book Swallows and Amazons.
9.00 Electric Dreams: Human Is. An official returns home from another world a changed man, to the delight of his unappreciated wife. But she begins to suspect he has been replaced by a different man.
10.00 8 Out of 10 Cats Does Countdown. Jimmy Carr hosts the comedy panel show's version of the words and numbers quiz. (R)
10.30 Formula 1 Mexican Grand Prix Highlights. Steve Jones and David Coulthard present action from the 18th round of the season, which took place at Autodromo Hermanos Rodriguez in Mexico City.
12.45 Grand Prix: The Killer Years. Documentary exploring the dangerous aspects of Formula One racing and the deaths that occurred at Grands Prix during the 1960s and early 70s. (R)**

CHANNEL 5

6.00 (GMT) Milkshake!: (GMT) Poppy Cat. 6.10 Little Princess. (R) 6.25 Wanda and the Alien. (R) 6.35 Milkshake! Monkey. (R) 6.40 Milkshake! Bopping About. (R) 6.45 Simon. (R) 6.50 Peppa Pig. (R) 6.55 Wissper. (R) 7.05 Paw Patrol. (R) 7.15 Bob the Builder. (R) 7.30 Fireman Sam. 7.45 Olly the Little White Van. (R) 7.50 Paw Patrol. (R) 8.10 Blaze and the Monster Machines. (R) 8.35 Noddy: Toyland Detective. (R) 8.55 Floodgals. (R) 9.05 Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom. (R) 9.15 Shimmer and Shine. (R) 9.35 Digby Dragon. (R) 9.50 Peppa Pig. (R) 10.00 Peppa Pig. (R) 10.05 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. (R) 10.40 Football on 5: The Championship. (R) 11.30 Football on 5: Goal Rush. (R) 12.00 FIA World Rally Championship Live. Coverage of the Wales Rally GB. 1.30 The A-Team. (R) 2.30 The A-Team. (R) 3.30 The A-Team. (R) 4.35 The A-Team. (R) 5.35 Film: The Man in the Iron Mask. (1998) Swashbuckling adventure, starring Leonardo DiCaprio. 6.35 5 News Update.
6.40 Film: The Man in the Iron Mask. (1998) Concluded.
8.00 Aviva Premiership Rugby Highlights. Mark Durden-Smith and David Flatman introduce action from the seventh round of matches, including Sale Sharks v Exeter Chiefs at AJ Bell Stadium, Northampton Saints v Wasps at Franklin's Gardens, and Harlequins v Worcester Warriors at The Stoop.
8.55 5 News Weekend. 9.00 When Talent Shows Go Horribly Wrong. Kate Thornton introduces a countdown of disastrous moments from TV talent shows, featuring first-hand contributions from stars including Pete Dinklage, Arlene Phillips, Brenda Edwards and Nicola Ward, the Popstars: The Rivals contestant who walked away from the chance to be in Girls Aloud. Plus, Marie Osmond fainting on air in Dancing with the Stars and the Dancing on Ice contestant who nearly got a skate in the eye.
12.00 Film: Seven Pounds. (2008) A man haunted by a tragedy seeks redemption for his past actions by helping seven seemingly unconnected strangers. Drama, with Will Smith, Rosario Dawson and Woody Harrelson. 2.10 SuperCasino. 3.10 Q&A: Behind Closed Doors. (R) 4.00 Cruising with Jane McDonald. (R) 4.50 Great Scientists. (R)

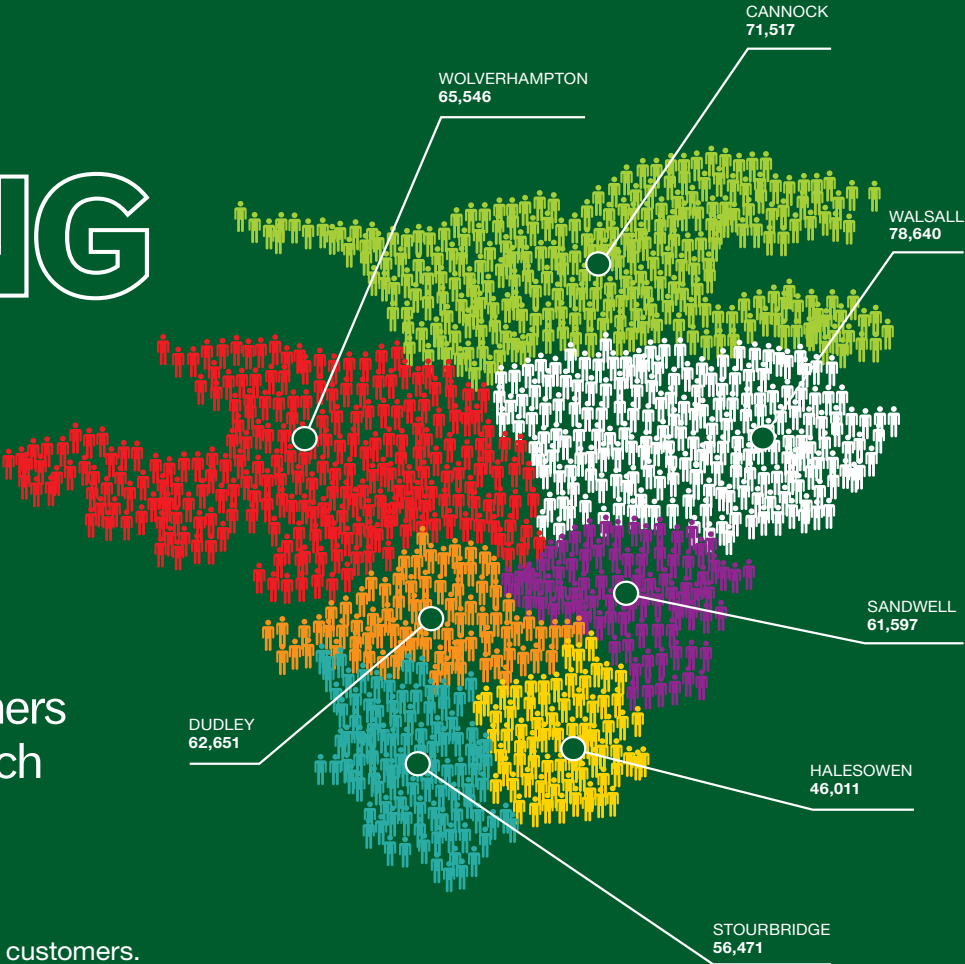
DIGITAL

BBC Four
7.00 (GMT) Botticelli's Venus: The Making of an Icon **7.30 University Challenge 8.00 Speechless 9.00 Natural World 10.00 Legends of the Deep: Giant Squid 10.45 Legends of the Deep: Deep Sea Sharks 11.40 Picasso: Love, Sex and Art 12.40 The Search for the Lost Manuscript: Julian of Norwich**
ITV2
11.05 2Awesome: Ready, Set, Style 11.30 2Awesome: Third Wheel 11.45 Take Me Out 12.55 Harry Hill's Alien Fun Capsule 1.20 You've Been Framed! Gold 2.15 You've Been Framed! Gold 2.15 Film: Corpse Bride (2005) 3.15 FYI Daily 3.20 Film: Corpse Bride (2005) 3.55 The Smurfs: The Legend of Smurfy Hollow 4.20 Film: Hotel Transylvania (2012) 5.20 FYI Daily 5.25 Film: Hotel Transylvania (2012) 6.05 Film: The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King (2003) 7.05 FYI Daily 7.10 Film: The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King (2003) 10.00 Family Guy 11.30 American Dad! 12.25 The Cleveland Show
ITV3
12.50 Film: The Mirror Crack'd (1980) 1.55 FYI Daily 2.00 Film: The Mirror Crack'd (1980) 3.00 Film: Rest in Peace, Mrs Columbo (1990) 5.00 Lewis 6.55 Midsomer Murders 9.00 The Syndicate 10.10 Honest 11.10 Film: Captain Corelli's Mandolin (2001) 12.20 FYI Daily 12.25 Film: Captain Corelli's Mandolin (2001) 1.40 The Knack
ITV4
11.20 Shed and Buried 12.20 Pawn Stars 12.45 Darts: European Championship Live. Day four from Hasselt, Belgium. 5.00 Snooker v Darts 5.05 Storage Wars 6.00 Pawn Stars 7.00 Darts: European Championship Live. Day four from Hasselt, Belgium. 11.00 Car Crash Global: Caught on Camera 12.00 Film: Born to Raise Hell (2010) 1.00 FYI Daily 1.05 Film: Born to Raise Hell (2010) 2.05 The Avengers
E4
11.00 Made in Chelsea 12.00 Don't Tell the Bride 1.00 The Goldbergs 3.30 The Big Bang Theory 9.00 Film: Die Hard 2 (1990) 11.25 David Blaine: Beyond Magic 12.25 Tattoo Fixers 1.30 Rude Tube 2.35 Brooklyn Nine-Nine
Film4
11.00 (GMT) The Rare Breed (1966) 1.00 Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Rodrick Rules (2011) 3.05 Von Ryan's Express (1965) 5.25 Vice Versa (1988) 7.20 Coneheads (1993) 9.00 Faster (2010) 10.55 Fright Night (1985) 1.10 Berberian Sound Studio (2012)

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FILM CHOICES

MONDAY

The Descent, Channel 5, 11.50pm

A woman recovering from a personal tragedy joins a group of friends on a caving expedition. However, their adventure takes a horrific turn when they find themselves trapped in an unexplored cavern, where savage creatures are lurking in the shadows. Horror from Dog Soldiers director Neil Marshall, starring Shauna Macdonald, Natalie Mendoza, Alex Reid and Nora-Jane Noone. (2005)

TUESDAY

he Ghost of Greville Lodge, Channel 5, 3.15pm

A teenage orphan is invited to stay at his great-uncle's sprawling country manor, where he becomes aware of ghostly happenings – and the mysteriously locked doors of the west wing. Then one night he wakes up to find himself in the middle of tragic past events. Supernatural family drama based on Nicholas Wilde's novel, starring George Cole, Prunella Scales, Jon Newman and Rebecca Weeks. (2000)



The Descent, Monday, Channel 5, 11.50pm

WEDNESDAY

Red Lights, Channel 4, 2.15am

A famous blind psychic returns to the public arena 30 years after his career ended in scandal and a suspicious death. A paranormal investigator ignores his mentor's warnings and tries to expose the spiritualist as a fraud. Thriller, starring Cillian Murphy, Sigourney Weaver and Robert De Niro. (2012)

THURSDAY

The Christmas Heart, Channel 5, 3.15pm

The people of a close-knit neighbourhood rally round when a local boy needs a heart transplant. Drama, starring Teri Polo and Ty Wood. (2012)

FRIDAY

The Pyramid, Channel 4, 12.10am

A previously unexplored pyramid is discovered in the Egyptian desert, and a party of archaeologists sets out to uncover its secrets. The explorers soon realise it was built to contain dark forces that they have now unleashed. Horror, starring Ashley Hinshaw and Denis O'Hare. (2014)

Comedy and drama is just what the doctor ordered

They say that there are few decent roles for women over a certain age – although perhaps they wouldn't if they saw Eileen Atkins' CV.

The veteran star, who is now 83, is as busy as ever. During the past 10 years, she's starred in Cranford, Marple, Poirot, Psychoville, Upstairs Downstairs (the revamped version of the 1970s hit she co-created with Jean Marsh), This Is Jinsy, The Crown and Carnage – and that's just on the small screen.

She also joined the cast of Doc Martin in 2011, playing the character's formidable aunt, Ruth Ellingham.

Atkins may be the oldest member of the cast, but nobody makes allowances for her age – not that she would want them to – as an anecdote about an early day of filming the current run reveals.

"It was an awfully cold day and we were filming on the side of a cliff near Tintagel," she recalls. "The day started well but by the end of the day it was raining and nasty. I

remember doing the last scene and everyone shouting 'do it in one take'.

"That's the perils of location filming. I always seem to get my heaviest scenes at the beginning when it's very cold. I am one of the coldest people in the world anyway.

"That day I was wearing three sets of thermals and heat patches on my back. Helen Felstead, the costume assistant, who looked after me, was fantastic. She'd have a big duvet coat and fur-lined boots ready for me to put on as soon as we broke from filming, and she gave me hot water bottles to hold. How she always found somewhere to boil a kettle to fill the hot water bottles, I don't know."

This series has reunited her with her old Upstairs Downstairs colleague Art Malik, who made a guest appearance as the son of a man Ruth was once in love with.

It was a touching storyline, but that's what Doc Martin does so well – it marries comedy and drama beautifully.

"I think Doc Martin is wonderful," says Atkins. "It has comedy, scenery, wonderful performances, not just Martin, who is supreme as a comedy actor, but there are lots of other brilliant actors.

And what I think is an absolute winner is every week you learn about a medical condition without seeing anything horrible."

Filming has proved to be a godsend for the actress, who lost her beloved husband Bill last year.

"I had not wanted to work after my husband Bill Shepherd died. If I hadn't promised already to do this I honestly think I would have just not bothered with anything any more. I kept thinking 'I've said I'll do it, so I have to go down there to Cornwall'.

"It's lifted my spirits to be here, so it's not just the work, but I have been glad of it, it has helped me through a difficult time as well."

Here's hoping it continues to do so.

Ian McNeice, Joe Absolom, Jessica Ransom, John Marquez and Selina Cadell also star.



Martin Clunes and Caroline Catz star in Doc Martin, Wednesday, ITV, 9pm

BEST OF THE REST

MONDAY

Nigella: At My Table BBC2, 8.30pm

New series. Nigella Lawson celebrates the food she loves to cook for friends and family at home, demonstrating a wide range of recipes that are warming, comforting and inspirational. In the first edition, she shares new discoveries like her Turkish-inspired eggs, old-fashioned favourites including the aptly named Queen of Puddings, as well as her emergency brownies. Nigella rustles up a simple chicken and pea tray-bake for a relaxed get-together around the table, and she finds a new use for a spiraller.

A Very Royal Wedding ITV, 9pm

A lot of pundits are claiming to hear wedding bells for Prince Harry, but the royal romance we should definitely be celebrating is that between the Queen and Prince Philip, who celebrate their 70th anniversary next month. To mark this auspicious occasion, Alexander Armstrong presents a feature-length documentary looking back at their big day. The wedding took place in a time of post-war austerity, but Armstrong finds out how a battered Britain still managed to make this a royal wedding to remember. Joan Collins and Sheila Hancock are

among the celebrities sharing their memories of the wedding, and the programme also hears from page boy Prince Michael of Kent. But this was in many ways the 'people's wedding' and Armstrong also hears from the ordinary people who helped make it happen, including one of the seamstresses who worked on the dress.

TUESDAY

The Great British Bake Off: The Final Channel 4, 8pm

One of the nicest surprises of 2017 has been how well Channel 4's updated twist on the old favourite Bake Off recipe has proved to be. The previously unknown ingredient – like when Iain used za'atar that time in series five – was new judge Prue Leith, while the strong but contrasting flavours of hosts Sandi Toksvig and Noel Fielding were already known to be delightful on their own, but it remained to be seen whether they would work together. Happily, it all came out rather nicely, and this year's Bake Off has gone down a treat. Now – rather too soon, we feel – it's time for the final, with the remaining three tasked with creating a vast and impressive spread in order to clinch the crown. But whose flavours will the judges favour?

WEDNESDAY

The Apprentice BBC1, 9pm

As Lord Sugar celebrates his 70th birthday, the contestants are tasked to a shopping spree across London to purchase items that mark milestones in his life and career. The candidates have one day to find nine specific items at the best possible price, before meeting at the House of Lords. For one team, there is confusion over the mystery object, while poor planning leaves the other team lagging behind. In the boardroom, Lord Sugar gives out warnings, as well as hefty fines.

THURSDAY

Harry Styles at the BBC BBC1, 8pm

You can run but you can't hide from those One Direction lads this week. While Liam Payne prepares to co-host Friday's Sounds Like Friday Night, there's no prizes



Harry Styles at the BBC, Thursday, BBC1, 8pm

for guessing who's following in the footsteps of Adele and Michael Buble for this one-off. Yes, fresh from the success of his appearance in global blockbuster Dunkirk, Harry Styles will be chatting to Nick Grimshaw about his rise from The X Factor wannabe, to 1D heartthrob, and his current projects. In early 2017, Styles launched his career as a solo artist when he premiered debut single Sign Of The Times on The Radio 1 Breakfast Show with Nick Grimshaw. Here he performs tracks from his self-titled debut album, as well as discussing his career.

FRIDAY Sounds Like Friday Night BBC1, 7.30pm

If a bad week continues to drag you down, what you need is a perfect music show. One thing that should make this second edition unforgettable is Liam Payne, one of the most successful singer-songwriters to emerge from Wolverhampton in years. Strip That Down, his debut single, shifted more than five million units worldwide, and big things are expected from his pending debut album. Aside from singing in the studio, and co-hosting performances from Liam Gallagher, whose debut solo album As You Were has been receiving plenty of publicity, and London Grammar.

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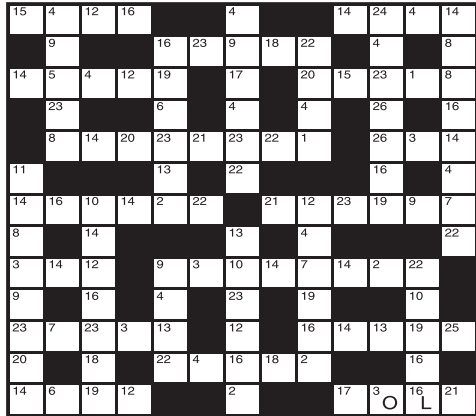
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BRAIN GYM

No.453

Codeword

Each number in the grid represents a different letter of the alphabet and every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter(s) to the right of the main grid to start you off.



LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION:

1	R	A	Y	J	K	O	T	X	N	C	E	Q	Z
2	P	B	D	I	M	G	L	H	U	W	S	V	F

Double Crossword

Choose either quick or cryptic clues - both fit the same grid.

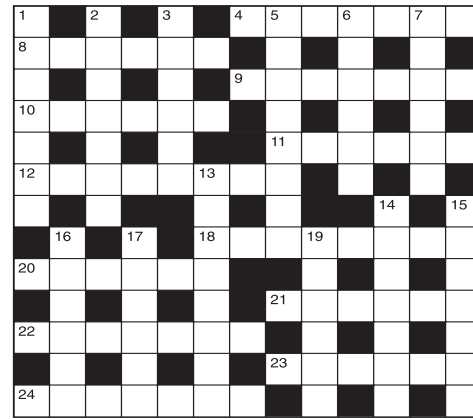
Cryptic Clues:

Across

4. Powder container fitting into a small space (7)
8. Trims off the fruit (6)
9. Bantering - gets in a confused state (7)
10. I'd put back the pole for the aerial (6)
11. Bound to be a geyser when hot (6)
12. Pay twice? (8)
18. The others need space for a place to recuperate (8)
20. No part for the benefactor (6)
21. Bill goes to this as an advertising operative (6)
22. Post above ground (7)
23. Jeers at relative in backstreet (6)
24. Tied up to a field outhouse (7)

Down

1. Natural weavers (7)
2. Accidental activities are not arranged on this (7)
3. Slug swallowed medicinally! (6)
5. Acts as superintendent abroad, we hear (8)
6. Nothing in the press arrangement will present problems (6)
7. Stick around at home like a dog (6)
13. Revolution with old weapon could take its toll! (8)
14. Foreshadow the demise of the dockyard (7)
15. What the reporter says to create an effect (7)
16. Piece of luggage is found in the river glade (6)
17. Allows little room for a racket in the Civil Service (6)
19. Apparently not a certain disciple (6)



Quick Clues:

Across

4. Advance (7)
8. Wandered (6)
9. Alms (7)
10. Grumble (6)
11. Tempt (6)
12. Horseman (8)
18. Sham (8)
20. Victor (6)
21. Look at (6)
22. Mollify (7)
23. Dream (6)
24. Encounter (7)

Down

1. Facial contortion (7)
2. Prisoner (7)
3. Disclose (6)
5. Practise (8)
6. Encompass (6)
7. Complete (6)
13. Incarcerate (8)
14. Void (7)
15. Principal (7)
16. Ordinary (6)
17. Devise (6)
19. Proposition (6)

Sudoku

	1	3		2		8		
6			5		8	9	1	
							5	4
		4	2	9				
9	5					7		
				7	5	2		
8	3					1		
	2	1	8				3	5
6		3		1		4		

Fill in the grid above so that every column, every row and each of the 3x3 boxes contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS:

3	4	6	8	7	2	1	9	5
1	7	8	4	9	5	6	2	3
2	9	5	3	1	6	4	7	8
5	3	2	9	8	4	7	1	6
7	6	9	2	3	1	5	8	4
4	8	1	6	5	7	9	3	2
9	1	4	5	2	8	3	6	7
6	2	7	1	4	3	8	5	9
8	5	3	7	6	9	2	4	1

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS:
CRYPTIC - Across: 1 Correctness; 9 Rob; 10 Plentiful; 11 Alien; 13 Rubbers; 14 Garden; 16 Relief; 18 Masters; 19 Sages; 20 Narrating; 21 Awe; 22 Meeting-room. Down: 2 Orb; 3 Ripen; 4 Cheers; 5 Notable; 6 Suffering; 7 Arrangement; 8 Close-fisted; 12 In reserve; 15 Elegant; 17 Assign; 19 Sugar; 21 Ache. QUICK - Across: 1 Change hands; 9 Art; 10 Semblance; 11 Dusky; 13 Slight; 14 Employ; 16 Attain; 18 Relieve; 19 Overt; 20 Emanating; 21 Ago; 22 Startlingly. Down: 2 Hot; 3 Nasty; 4 Enmesh; 5 Ailment; 6 Denigrate; 7 Hard-hearted; 8 Destination; 12 Suppliant; 15 Open-air; 17 Denial; 19 Organ; 21 All.

Quiz

1. What type of acid does a car battery contain?
2. What is the capital of Burgundy, famous for its mustard?
3. What tree provides the majority of a koala's diet?
4. Whose film Alexander Nevsky forms part of an uncompleted trilogy?
5. Which jockey has ridden the most National Hunt winners?
6. How many Inns of Court are there in London?
7. How is deuterium oxide better known?
8. In which country is the port of Arica?
9. How many Oscars did Schindler's List win?
10. In which art gallery is the Venus de Milo?

Last week's solutions:

Quiz: 1 Atlas; 2 Kennedy's; 3 Eleven; 4 The Magic Mountain; 5 St Francis of Assisi; 6 Nick Park; 7 The Rolling Stones; 8 Queen Mab; 9 Henry VIII; 10 Santiago.
Niner: FURNISHED

Niner

Each number from 1 to 9 represents a different letter. Solve the clues and insert the letters in the appropriate squares to discover a word which uses all nine letters.

5941
32554
35688274

gives a Welsh seaside resort,
gives a second Welsh seaside resort,
gives a French region.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

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Give someone the gift of relaxation

IT'S been a bit of a whirlwind year so far. Our daughter booked her wedding for the first day of September on a late availability. A great deal but it meant everything had to be done at speed. Find a dress, book a photographer, flowers, cake, outfits etc etc

But all ended well with a fantastic day at the lovely Rowton Castle in Shropshire and the bride looked stunning. She brought a lump to our throats. And at the end of the day we all said the same – wish we could turn back the clock and do it all again.

Then off they went on honeymoon and we were left feeling a bit flat, all the excitement over – be nice to have something to look forward to, reduce the stress, fill the gap, you know what I mean.

CHOICE

With all the festive goods filling the shops now and no doubt many families trawling the internet for gifts for loved ones I thought the stressed – and now a lot poorer post wedding – parents, ie us, should trial the perfect gift. A wonderful way to unwind and the perfect way to treat a relative or friend or even better, yourself!

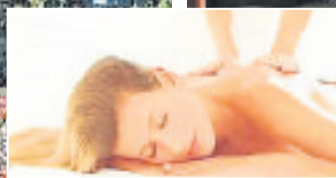
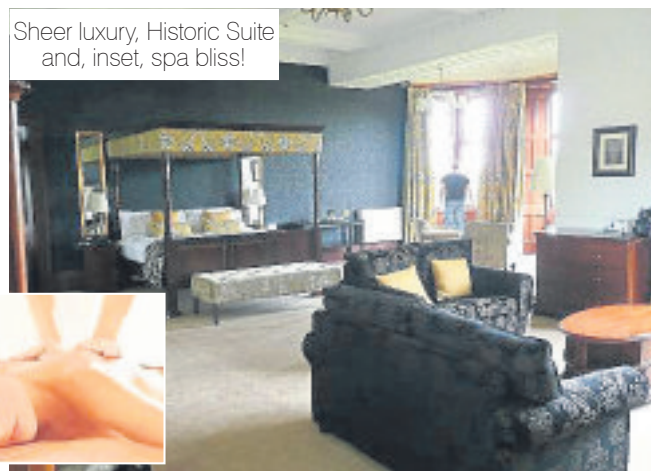
There are some things that internet shopping cannot replace and this is one of them. A couple of days away, relaxing with good food and entertainment, so where else but a Warner holiday. Yes, we have several grandchildren now who we love to see but it is nice sometimes to be adult only.

We could not have made a better choice. Thoresby Hall in Nottinghamshire – a bit like going home as a lot of our family live over that way. This grand building is just one of the many luxurious Warner sites and boasts a particularly good spa. With that in mind we booked in for two nights. Last minute thing so we did not know

So grand – and just as impressive inside



Sheer luxury, Historic Suite and, inset, spa bliss!



what we were getting but OMG when we got there what a wonderful surprise. We had been booked into an historic suite with four poster bed, enormous en suite with its own TV so you watch while you lay in the sunken bath. This is the life!

As we had chosen Thoresby to sample the spa facilities we tried two of the vast array of the treatments on offer. My husband went for the Lava Shells massage which he thoroughly enjoyed, and I opted for the Spa Find Age Away, body exfoliating and massage and facial. I started chatting away to Jasmine but after a few

minutes it was silence as I just drifted away. The spa also boasts a Turkish steam room, sauna, foot spa and hydrotherapy pool.

The dining at Thoresby is first class and the stay includes breakfast and three-course dinner before you head to the Pavilion club for a superb night of entertainment. For the two days we never set foot off site – no need to. There is so much on offer – sports, archery, rifle shooting, walks, tennis and bowls and indoor classes in everything you could image – even making towel animals. We found a great bulldog

towel on our bed when we first arrived. A lovely touch. So while our daughter was enjoying her overseas honeymoon our break may have been a lot shorter and close to home but was thoroughly enjoyable.

Thoresby offers lots of spa packages, ideal for Christmas or birthdays, covering everything from nails to reiki. Most popular is a massage and next is a facial.

A spa day with a 25-min treatment costs £99 or for a complete chill out enjoy two 55-min treatments and a two-hour spa experience, with buck's fizz on arrival for £109. What a way to unwind. SUE ATTWATER

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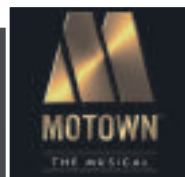
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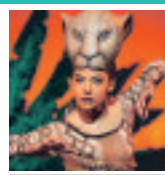
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Fiesta matures from cheeky chappie

By Ian Donaldson

A COUPLE of miles into the test drive I realised the car was humming quietly along the main road – in fourth gear.

If ever you needed a demonstration that the new Fiesta has matured into an even more serious player here it was, with two gears left to go.

At a stroke the best selling car in the UK for the last eight years has turned from cheeky chappie (but loads of fun) into a car that feels bigger and softer and not quite so keen to have a laugh with you.

That certainly applies to the likely biggest seller in the new range, the Zetec trim version with its 100 horsepower engine and – crucially – new six-speed gearbox instead of the previous five.

There's also a more sporty tied-down ST-Line Fiesta which early signs say has fun factor 50 but it's going to be a relatively small seller, thoroughly outgunned by less expensive versions – and with the Zetec taking more than half the total sales.

So it's good that the Zetec – second up in a Fiesta pecking order stretching from 70 horsepower petrol £12,715 Style to 120 horsepower diesel £21,225 Vignale – is such an instant charmer.

More so on the inside than out, you'd have to say. The exterior of the latest Fiesta has grown very modestly (70mm longer, 13mm wider but 20mm lower) and is completely restyled, although you might never guess.

That's as fine a compliment to the outgoing model as you could pay; don't mess with a look that's won thousands of sales. Doesn't do VW any harm with succeeding generations of Golfs, does it?

The result is a car with space to spare in the front – and a near perfect driving position – but just enough room in the rear for a couple of adults and a boot big enough for a family's supermarket shop but less generous than some of the competition.

Inside is where the attention needed to be paid, with the old car's dashboard looking increasingly like a relic from the past, littered with meanly sized displays and an excess of tiny buttons. All gone! Replaced in the modern minimalist fashion by a big iPad-like touchscreen that looks smart but doesn't have a lot to say for itself without a satellite navigation map on display (sat nav is standard on some dearer cars, a £300 option on others).

There's more soft touch plastic than previously, lending a gently more upmarket feel to proceedings. With the posh Vignale version you will enjoy the heated leather seats and steering wheel that a mere Zetec trim car can only dream about.

If the all-change interior is much needed step up, the engine choice is mostly as before, which is no bad thing if you enjoy the willing thrum of a three-cylinder petrol unit. Gone is the old and mildly asthmatic 1.25 litre engine, with most new Fiestas using versions of the established 1.0 litre three-cylinder unit in differing outputs – 100/125/140 horsepower and with CO2 readings from as low as 97g/km.

The old 1.5 litre diesel engine remains, in two power outputs (85/120 horsepower, from 82g/km), but will take less than one in ten sales.

The new six-speed manual gearbox will feature in the bulk of new Fiestas, which will have five doors too. Ford is sticking with a



The exterior of the latest Fiesta has grown very modestly and is completely re-styled

three-door option in a market increasingly ditching this choice on the grounds that not enough buyers bother these days to make it worthwhile.

The on-paper list price of most cars in an irrelevance these days and that's absolutely the case with the Fiesta, where 85 per cent of private buyers will opt for a personal contract plan (PCP) that provides a Zetec-spec car from £116 a month over three years and

with a £5,000 deposit. That's an increase of £15 a month over the outgoing and a drive in the new one makes that look a sensible investment.

Tweaks to the suspension and clearly a lot of work on soundproofing have changed the Fiesta into a car that quietly soaks up bad British road surfaces, only objecting a little to the biggest bumps, and turning into corners with most of the eagerness of old.

Even with fourth gear standing in for sixth some of the time (blame that newfound quietness) the test drive showed 46mpg in a 100 horsepower version, which never felt underpowered.

If a tiny bit of the puppy dog spirit has gone you have to reckon the payback in refined progress is going to be welcomed by the majority of owners. And there are quicker, firmer ones on the way soon, don't forget.



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Skoda's Citigo is a strong contender

By Jack Evans

The Skoda Citigo is about as no-frills a car as you can get today. It's designed for urban drivers who need a practical but compact way of getting around, as well as for those who don't want to pay the earth in running costs. The original car did this to a tee and it was updated for 2017.

What does that mean? Well, the exterior – which was never bad looking in the first place – was treated to a reshaped front grille and modified bumper as well as daytime running lights. There's also a jazzy new colour – Kiwi Green – which stands out against the plethora of grey and black hues currently on the road today.

Inside, you now get a redesigned instrument cluster while a new infotainment system gives clearer control over the DAB digital radio and media options. There's even a multifunction steering wheel available – though this is an optional extra.

The previous-generation Citigo was a good-looking little car and thankfully Skoda has only improved the package. The daytime running lights give it a little more presence on the road, while redesigned 15-inch alloy wheels fill the Citigo's arches nicely. The all-new Kiwi Green colour looks great on the car too.

The Citigo's interior has a quality to it that you'd expect from cars double its price. Everything feels exceptionally well put together, and though there are some harder plastics to be found, you need to remember that they're in a car which can be bought for a shade under £9,000.

It's impressive, just as it was in the original, while the variety of Skoda 'Simply Clever'



There's 215 litres of seats-up boot space

features – an umbrella under the front passenger seat and a fold-out bag hook on the handle of the glove compartment, for instance – only add to the interior's quality.

Given that the Citigo measures just 3,597mm then you wouldn't expect to find much in the way of practicality. The reality couldn't be further from the truth. In five-door layout, there's 251 litres of seats-up boot space, rising to 959 litres with them folded down. It has a split floor too, giving a far more flexible storage solution.

Front seat passengers get plenty of leg and headroom, while those in the back are – surprisingly – equally well catered for. Of course, taller passengers may struggle in terms of headroom, but occupants of average height will be more than comfortable.

In the modern motorway age of driving assists and autonomous steering, the Citigo offers a driving experience that is nothing short of refreshing. There haven't been any



The daytime running lights give it a little more presence on the road, while redesigned 15-inch alloy wheels fill the Citigo's arches nicely

mechanical changes made to this car over the previous model, which means that it drives just as well as it did.

The steering is light but communicative, while the five-speed manual gearbox has a decent action.

The engine needs to be worked hard at times – especially on steep gradients – but most of the time it's settled and refined – something you wouldn't expect from a three-cylinder.

It's a basic driving experience, that's for

sure, but that doesn't stop it from being an enjoyable one. And if you're after a car that is happier doing longer miles, then the more powerful engine is the one to go for.

If you want a Citigo with all the bells and whistles then that's what you can get in the £11,325 Monte Carlo-edition car. In truth though, we'd recommend going for a more base-spec Citigo, as it lies closer to the car's no-frills mentality than the more equipment-laden models.

The SE model is the pick of the bunch

in our eyes, offering air conditioning, rear folding seats and an infotainment system with Bluetooth connectivity and six speakers for £9,635 for the 59bhp, three-door model. It also remains a very good car for first-time drivers thanks to its Group 2 insurance rating.

The Citigo is ideal for drivers who want a car that isn't festooned with technology, and one which doesn't cost all that much to run. As mentioned earlier, it's also a great choice for just-passed motorists who are looking to keep insurance premiums to a minimum.



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MINI 1499 GT latest special edition to the UK line-up



Recalling the entertaining drive and distinctive styling

The latest special edition to join the MINI UK line-up celebrates the brand's rich heritage with a nod to one of the best known sporty classic Minis of all time, the 1275 GT.

Available to order now, the 1499 GT recalls the entertaining drive, distinctive styling and low running costs of the 1969 original, which was one of the most affordable performance cars of its day.

The 1275 GT badging reflected the increased engine capacity over the standard 998cc Mini. The all-new MINI 1499 GT treads a similar path for 2017. With 102 hp on tap and 0-60mph in 10.1 seconds courtesy of its lively Twin Power Turbo three-cylinder engine, the 1499 GT is perfect for drivers seeking an entertaining drive and unique vehicle.

The 1499 GT will be built in a limited production run of just 1,499 cars between November 2017 and

February 2018, and is sure to be in high demand.

For the launch of the 1499 GT, MINI Financial Services has launched an enticing new finance offer. MINI Ready Fuel Go* offers one year's inclusive insurance (subject to terms**) with a £299 customer deposit and £299 monthly payment. On the road pricing starts at £16,990.

There will be a choice of two colours, Pepper White or Midnight Black. In Midnight Black, the car gets distinctive gold 1499 GT side stripes. Pepper White models feature the same distinctive graphics, but in black.

Additional exterior features include the MINI John Cooper Works Sport Pack, featuring 17" Track Spoke alloy wheels in Black, dark tinted windows and white indicator lenses. The styling pack includes distinctive John Cooper Works front and rear

bumpers, side skirts, a split level spoiler and John Cooper Works door entry plates.

Interior features include John Cooper Works Sports seats in Dinamica and leather and JCW badges, a JCW steering wheel in perforated leather with Chilli Red stitching and multi-function controls, cruise control, a Visual Boost radio with MINI Connected smartphone compatibility and Piano Black interior trim, along with Carbon Black interior details and an Anthracite headlining.

A sports suspension completes the MINI 1499 GT package, which also includes all of the standard equipment found on the MINI One Hatch. This includes features such as independent rear suspension, a six-speed manual gearbox with sports-car inspired rev matching technology, air conditioning and all-round disc brakes.

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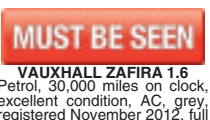
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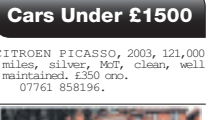
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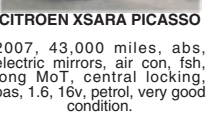
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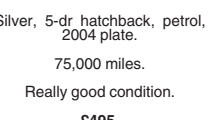
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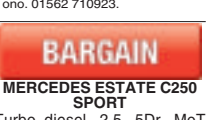


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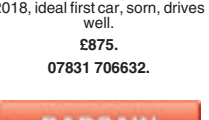


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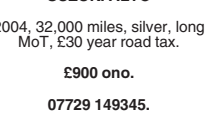


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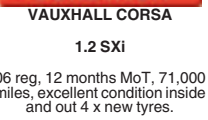
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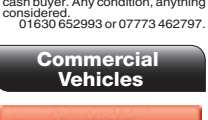
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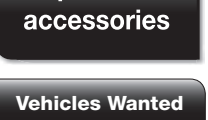
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Black Country pair Peter Wright, left, and Martin Siviter celebrate a win



Burntwood's Lloyd Shelley was fourth in the 'Stars of Darley'



Sidecar race title winner Keith Box, of Wolverhampton, with Anthony Eades



Neil Lloyd of Wednesbury. Darley Moor pictures by Tony Else



Dudley's Mark Cockerton – second in the Classic 350 Class



Andrew Lowe receives the Jake Hingley Trophy from Neil Hingley

Darley racers Moor the merrier for track success

MORE trophies and memorable rides proved a fitting finale for the region's top club riders as the curtain fell on another Darley Moor Motor Cycle Club campaign.

The final eight championships were all settled during round seven while a new 'Star' of Darley Moor was also crowned.

Burntwood ace Lloyd Shelley decided to step up and compete in the main races, having already claimed the Sound of Thunder and Formula 600 titles with a round to spare.

After some intense racing against British Superbike stars Ben Godfrey, Richard Cooper and Tom Fisher, the 33-year-old secured an impressive sixth in the opening race.

Riding a Triumph 675, he was also the fastest non-1000cc machine racer to cross the line.

Shelley then finished fifth in race two to secure overall fourth place for the 'Stars of Darley'.

Combined

Newly-crowned Pre Injection 600 champion Andrew Lowe, from Stone – who also finished third overall in the Pre Injection (Up to 1300cc) – took a start-to-finish victory in the combined Steel Framed 600/Pre Injection 600 race.

His win saw him claim the Jake Hingley Trophy in memory of a racer who began his career at Darley Moor in 1912 before his life was cut short following a crash at Cadwell Park two years later. Jake's father Neil was on hand to present the trophy to Lowe.

The success capped off another memorable year for the region's riders, which also saw Anthony Eades and Wolverhampton passenger Keith Box claim the sidecar title, Dudley's Mark Cockerton finish second in the Classic 350 class, and Willenhall's McCauley

SPORTING FEATURE

By James Driver-Fisher

"Thank you to the competitors that come back each week, putting on the show for the spectators."

Longmore third in the Formula 125 class. Wednesbury's Neil Lloyd, 47, was fourth in the Lightweight class having missed a few rounds due to road racing commitments. He said: "We're going to make a decision over the next few weeks as to whether we're running the Honda RVF next year or to change class and bike."

"Either way, we're putting an entry in for the Isle of Man's Manx GP, although I might be too old to enter now. Hopefully we can have a successful 2018."

Darley spokesman Brian George said: "The club wishes to thank all the spectators who attended, the majority of which stayed to the end, and those who have supported the club throughout the year."

"A huge thank you obviously goes out to the dedicated marshals and officials who have endured a wide variety of weather conditions this year and without who there would be no racing."

"And last, but definitely not least, thank you to the competitors that come back each week, putting on the show for the spectators."

The club's annual awards dinner will be held in Stoke-on Trent on February 3. Meanwhile, a new

track proved no obstacle for Double Two Racing as the three-rider team pulled off their best result of the year – despite having already wrapped up the title – during the penultimate round.

After altering their usual pit stops for round nine of the No Limit endurance championship at Croft, in Yorkshire, the Black Country racers came first in the 600 class.

Pete Wright, from Tividale, and Blackheath's Martyn Siviter admitted it had been a 'cracking result'. They were inspired by one-time guest rider Scott Stevens – who they bumped into on the day and who had previously recorded fast times around the track.

Wright said: "Scott, having tested at Croft two weeks previously, was already up to speed and his track tips were invaluable."

After qualifying a season high third on the grid, Siviter started the race for the first time since suffering a monster crash at Donington.

Fitness

"We knew we would likely drop a few places but we decided to change things up a little with the title already won," said Wright. "The first pit stop was scheduled for 50 minutes mainly to avoid the usual 45-minute melee."

"Mart got a great start back to full fitness and as he pulled down pit lane we sat second in class and a brilliant eighth overall."

After a faultless pit stop Wright was sent on his way, 36 seconds behind Club 600 leaders Track Prep, before handing back to Siviter for the final push. At the chequered flag, the team had finished first in class, fourth in National 600 and sixth overall.

Double Two Racing were also back in action at Donington Park for the final time and ensured they signed off with 100 per cent podium finishing record after finishing third.

Over the top action to see champ crowned

THE first WPW champion will be crowned when Wulfrun Pro Wrestling returns to Wolverhampton next weekend.

A night of heavy hitting, body slamming action is on the cards at Penn URC Community Hall, Penn Road, on Saturday November 4.

Four Wrestlers will compete in a one-night tournament to decide the champion. Jessie Jones, 'The Bouncer' and 'The Judge' have already qualified as the result of matches over 2017 and the fourth will be the winner of an over the top rope Battle Royal that will start the show.

Fans will also see the latest chapter in the WPW Women's Division as Millie McKenzie and Shauna Shay take on the duo of Nightshade and Evelyn. Tickets cost £6 or £20 for a party of four. Refreshments and merchandise are available and fans can also buy a backstage pass to meet the wrestlers and personalities afterwards for photos and autographs.

Doors open at 6pm for a 6.30pm start. Reserve seats via <https://www.facebook.com/wulfrunprowrestling/>

Coach on shortlist for top sporting award

A SPORTS coach from Dudley has been nominated for a top award. Rus Smith has been shortlisted for Coach Developer of the Year at the UK Coaching Awards – now in its 20th year.

Smith, who works for StreetGames, has worked tirelessly to develop coaches, staff and volunteers who are changing lives in some of the UK's most challenging and deprived communities. He has developed a support programme called 'Coach Mate Connector' that has been integrated into the work of StreetGames and delivered nationally, outside of the classroom.

Smith has offered his coach developing services to the FA and the Stourbridge League. He leads the development of trainers and coach developers in the Midlands for StreetGames, delivering to more than 1,000 learners in the last 12 months.

Following public nominations, finalists have been selected by a judging panel for 11 awards; eight for coaches and three in support of coaching. The showpiece annual event is on November 30 at The HAC, City of London.

Sponsors sought as athlete targets Euros

AN endurance sportsman is looking for sponsorship as he goes from strength to strength. Rob Kennard, of Kingswinford, a member of Black Country Triathletes, has been competing in duathlons for seven years after discovering a love for cycling and running.

This year has been his most successful to date, winning his age group at the Powerman Duathlon in Mallorca and more recently finishing first in age group at the Bedford Autodrome Duathlon – qualifying him for the 2018 European Duathlons in Ibiza.

Kennard finished the 10km run, 20km bike ride and a 5km run in 2:03:58, placing him 27th overall and first home in the 50-54 age group.

Age group athletes fund all their training, kit and race entry and Kennard would welcome sponsorship from any local company who could support him. His target for 2018 is to achieve an overall podium place at the European Championships. He will be start his training in full in the New Year. To support the athlete, contact kennywolves@hotmail.com



Visitors are too Shaw in front of goal

Stourbridge 0 Grantham 2

THE Glassboys suffered a third straight home defeat as Grantham completed a classic smash and grab raid to claim the Evo-Stik Premier Division points.

Two late goals from striker Lee Shaw was sufficient to seal victory for Grantham.

Shaw broke through twice in the opening two minutes, but his first effort was ruled off-side while the second forced a fine save from Glassboys goalkeeper Matt Gould.

Stourbridge carved an opening of their own on six minutes, but Grantham keeper Kieran Preston rushed off his line to smother at the feet of new signing Luke Shearer.

Luke Shearer had a better opportunity to break the deadlock when put clear by Tom Tonks, but the marksman fired wide.

Grantham appeared to step up gear after the break and Stourbridge had a let-off when a close range shot from Danny Meadows struck Gould and rebounded to safety.

Moments later, Stourbridge striker Jordan Archer saw his header turned onto the post by Preston.

Shaw eventually struck the decisive goal on 82 minutes when an initial shot from Burrows rebounded back kindly for the striker to be slotted home from close range after Stourbridge had struggled to clear their ranks from a Grantham corner. Andrew Wright grabbed a second deep into stoppage time when he lobbed beyond Gould.

McAtee brace the perfect tonic for lowly Halesowen

Halesowen Town 4 Lancaster City 3

ON-LOAN John McAtee struck twice to ease Halesowen further away from the bottom of the table in a seven-goal thriller.

Halesowen snatched a 38th minute lead when Jack Kelly's corner sailed along the penalty area and was scrambled home by captain Asa Charlton.

Man-of-the-match McAtee provided the final touch to beat visiting goalkeeper Joshua Powell to make it 2-0 in the 48th minute. McAtee then smashed home his second goal from a wide angle in the 57th minute.

Lancaster staged a dramatic recovery with three late goals. The visitors made it 3-1 in the 77th minute through Steve Williams. Dan Platt made a great save from substitute Thomas Kilfin in the 80th minute but Melle Meulensteen was on hand to turn home the rebound and reduce the arrears further at 3-2.

Substitute Mo Diop seemed to have calmed the late nerves when he slotted Halesowen's fourth goal. But there was still time for Meulensteen to head home Akkig's cross.

Fast Dan hammers speedway rivals



Bewley on track to victory. Pic: Steve Feeney

HOT prospect Dan Bewley warmed up an autumn night with a superb triumph in the FAST Golden Hammer t Monmore Green on Monday night.

Bewley triumphed in a dramatic three-man run-off with former Heathen Max Clegg and Lakeside's Ben Morley. The three hurtled down the back straight three abreast and it looked odds against all three staying on through the turn. But in a breathtaking move it was Bewley, the 18-year-old Cumbrian, who hit the front and powered home to win from Clegg and Morley.

Cradley trio Joe Lawlor, Conor Dwyer and Luke Harris could not mount a title challenge, testament to the customary strong field assembled. The meeting also featured a rare father and son contest with Lee and Kean Dicken both in the field. Dad Lee won that one, 5-0 on the night. Scores: Dan Bewley 13, Max Clegg 13, Ben Morley 13, Ashley Morris 12, Broc Nicol 11, Jason Edwards 10, Luke Harris 9, Joe Lawlor 7, Chris Widman 7, Connor Coles 6, Lee Dicken 5, Bradley Andrews 5, Taylor Hampshire 3, Dan Greenwood 3, Conor Dwyer 3, Kean Dicken 0, James Chattin (res) did not ride, Stephen Whitehouse (res) did not ride. Run-off: Bewley, Clegg, Morley.

LIONS SILENCED IN OWN DEN

Leicester Lions 13 Stourbridge 27

LUTTERWORTH Road is never an easy place to play but Stour came away with their eighth bonus point victory.

The game saw the league's two top try scorers, Devon Constant and Joe Heatley in action so an exciting game was in prospect. Storm Brian was also to play an important part with strong winds gusting at over 50 mph.

The visitors kicked off with wind advantage and the first quarter of the game saw Lions with superior possession and territorial advantages.

Stour were not helped when after just two minutes No 9 Ben Tibbetts was carried off with a nasty leg injury, Rod Petty coming on.

Stour were to lose more shape as the game went on with Chad Thorne off at half-time and Nick David after 59 minutes. Charlie Jeavons Fellows was also having a punishing game and Chris Scott battled on after a golf ball sized lump appeared on his right cheek, sustained in a tackle.

Lions were first on the scoresheet through a Jon Boden penalty on three minutes.

Joe Heatley darted 30 metres for the first try of the game. Nick David added the extras.

The second try came from hooker Jake Lea, but Scott's difficult conversion attempt shaved the upright.

Scott took an opportunity to add three points but only after the wind contrived that the ball inched over the cross bar! This gave Stourbridge clear water and Leicester Lions needing at least three scores to catch or overtake them.

The visitors were finally rewarded by a Nick Murphy try. This did galvanise the hosts who then added five points through Constant. The conversion was missed and the scoreboard showed an intriguing 8-20 with 17 minutes left. Lions No 6, Drew Rudkin was carded for a technical offence that gave referee Rayner no option to award a penalty try for deliberately collapsing a maul. Four minutes later, matters were evened up when Jack Lea took a team yellow card and Lions' John Murdoch crashed over.

Head over heels at hall of fame



Kristian Thomas inducted into the hall of fame

GYMNASTICS champion Kristian Thomas has spoken of his immense pride after being inducted into the British Gymnastics Hall of Fame – just days after announcing his retirement at the age of 28.

Thomas, who was born in Wolverhampton, trained at Halesowen's Earls Gym and now lives in Cannock, received a standing ovation at the British Gymnastics 2017 National Awards on Saturday. He became only the second athlete – and first male – to be inducted, following



Thomas in gymnastics action

Beth Tweddle in 2014. He said: "It is a great privilege. It is quite a prestigious award in British Gymnastics."

Thomas led the GB men's artistic team for over a decade and has taken multiple individual honours at World, European and Commonwealth Games. This included winning Olympic bronze with the British team at London 2012.

On his retirement, Thomas said: "Now is the time to try something new and hang up the guards."

Blizzard runs into gale on south coast

THE cross country season opened at the weekend for athletes from Dudley Kingswinford Running Club as the blue hoops travelled the short distance to Aldersley Stadium, Wolverhampton for the Midlands Cross Country Relays.

With the men running four legs of 6k and the ladies running over three legs but the same distance there were plenty of chances for the club's stalwarts to get their spikes dirty and get involved in the cross country experience before the league programme starts in a few weeks.

After a handful of late defections DK fielded two complete men's teams with the Senior Men finishing in 43rd place with Richard Jones going off first and finishing in 29.36, Simon Hughes ran 26.35, Stephen Parr 28.19 and Sergei Ljubovnikov in 28.53. The Men's Masters team of Dave Norman with a 25.47 leg, Mark Homer 26.04, Graham Wildgoose 28.03 and Andrew Weaver in 28.09 placed ninth. Single club runner, Russell Fox, was the DK Masters B team on his own and ran a 33.50 leg.

For the ladies, Sarah Cox ran 38.25 for the first leg, Susan Barley ran 38.20 and Jan Burbie brought the team home in 37.04.

Twenty four hours later, Simon Blizzard and Michael and Helen Williamson battled the double trials of Storm Brian and the 10-mile distance of the Great South Run, starting in Portsmouth and through the naval dockyards before finishing with a two miles straight along the sea front into the teeth of a gale.

Awards highlight best of youngsters

IT was a quiet weekend on the racing front for Black Country Triathletes but that still didn't stop some of the juniors celebrating their success from the season when they attended the West Midlands British Triathlon awards ceremony on Sunday.

Awards were presented for the West Midlands Junior Series 2017. Scarlett Williams won first place in the Tri Star 1 age group. Ben Lucas took first in the Tri Star 2 age group with Abi Hathaway 3rd and Lydia Silk took 3rd in the Youth category.

All juniors are now looking forward to the new season starting in March 2018.

The Chronicle, a Midland News Association Ltd publication, printed by the company at Ketley, Telford. Thursday, October 26, 2017

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